

1484. e. 24.



ACT IV. SCENE XIII.



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ACT IV. SCENE XIII.

THE  
HONEST FARMER.

A DRAMA, IN FIVE ACTS,

*To which are added,*

VANITY PUNISHED,  
AND BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

BY

M. BERQUIN,

AUTHOR OF THE CHILDRENS' FRIEND.

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To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,  
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,  
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,  
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold.

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A NEW EDITION.

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## CHARACTERS.

Squire SPARKS.

Farmer THOROWGOOD, *his Tenant.*

MARTHA, *the Farmer's Wife.*

VALENTINE, *their supposed Son.*

GEORGE,  
JENNY,  
LUCY, } *their Children.*

STEWARD to Squire Parks.

HUMPHRIES,  
HEARTY,  
MEADOWS, } *Neighbours of Thorowgood.*

THE  
HONEST FARMER.

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SCENE I. *The Farmer's House.*

SCENE I.

(*Martha standing by a table cutting two slices of bread and butter.*)

AFTER having laboured so hard during the best part of our lives, thus at last to fall into poverty! To what purpose is it, that we have never ceased our cares and pains for a single moment, in order to breed up our children with credit? If they were but of an age to earn their own bread, it would be something! My dear children, it is not for myself, it is for you that I shed tears; in losing our cattle we have lost our all. What remains is far from being sufficient to pay our landlord. What is to become of us? If my good husband did not support my sinking courage, I should

A

die

die with grief. But how worthy a character he is! What a man! How tranquil in the midst of our misfortunes! Were I not sure that affection makes him conceal the greatest part of his troubles from the fear of afflicting me, I should believe he were insensible to them. "Why dost thou weep, Martha?" he often says, when I can no longer restrain my tears; "We have had a loss, it is true; but who knows what Providence has in store for us? I, for my part, make that my dependence." Alas! though never rich himself, he was always a friend to the unfortunate! How many families in this village has he saved from misery by his advice and assistance! There is not a better man on earth; and I still possess what many women want in the midst of riches, a worthy husband, and children whose good dispositions fill our hearts with joy. Whilst I think on these blessings, I feel that Providence watches over us, and my griefs become lighter. Take courage then, Martha, enough is left to console thee in thy affliction. (*She advances to the door and calls*) Jenny, Jenny!

SCENE



## SCENE II.

*Martha, Jenny.*

*Jenny.* Did you call?

*Martha.* Here, my child, take thy breakfast.

*Jenny.* Oh, my dear mother, you have given me above half; I cannot eat all this.

*Martha.* No; look at it, it is no more than thy ordinary portion: you are not ill, I hope?

*Jenny.* Not at all; but I have not so good an appetite as usual.

*Mar.* What is it you tell me? How long is it since you have been thus dainty? Come, come, eat your breakfast like a good girl.

*Jenny, (taking the bread and breaking it in two)* It is too much, I assure you; half of it is sufficient for me. *(She gives the other half to her mother)* Here, keep this for Lucy.

*Mar.* What! has she given you the measure of her appetite, I pray?

*Jenny.* This is enough for her; I know she will not ask for more.

*Mar.* You seem to think you know your sister wonderful well; but I answer for it,

Lucy can eat her own share as well as you: here is a piece that I have prepared for her.

*Jenny.* No, no; she will keep that for the evening, and then she will give me half in her turn: leave us alone, we have settled the matter between us.

*Mar.* What means all this? I am curious to know.

*Jenny.* Why do you ask me? It is a secret between us two: I beg, dear mother, that you will not seem as if you perceived any thing of the matter.

*Mar.* Nay, now you increase my curiosity, and I must absolutely know the bottom of this.

*Jenny.* Well then, since you command it, I will tell you all: yesterday evening we overheard my father say to you, since we have suffered the loss of our cattle, we must submit to the will of Heaven, and try to turn this misfortune into a blessing; we must be the more diligent and industrious, and strive with all possible œconomy to support our family. You replied, with an embrace, that you would be the first to set the example. I made a sign to my sister to retire; we embraced each other also; whatever you had engaged to do for us, we agreed together in return to do for you.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* My dear children, you take too large a share in our troubles, they are not suited to your age ; fear nothing, Heaven will have care of you. Oh, my child, you have made me feel the happiness of being a mother. What earthly good can equal the joy which this instance of your tender duty has given me ! but be comforted. I have reserved the remainder of this for you, and you may, at least to-day, eat your bread as usual ; it is necessary that you should get strength, in order to earn something for us when you grow older. Will you not be glad to labour for your father and mother ?

*Jenny.* Ah, glad indeed ! that I shall ; but we can begin now : our hands, it is true, are small, but we will work the longer for that, and all that we earn we will give to my father to purchase more cattle. Then we will rear poultry and sell our eggs ; and this money, all this money, we will gladly bring to you, dear mother. (*Seeing the tears in her mother's eyes.*) Oh, do not weep, I beseech you ; you make my heart sink.

*Mar.* Be satisfied ; if I weep it is for joy ; but it is time that thou should'st breakfast. There are many things to do in the house,

and I would have thy father find every thing in order at his return.

*Jenny.* Is he gone into the field with my brothers?

*Mar.* No, he took a walk down to the hall; he wanted to speak with our landlord.

*Jenny.* Oh, so much the better. My father always came home in good spirits from him. That Mr. Parks is an excellent man, is he not?

*Mar.* Yes, my dear, hitherto he has been very good to us; pray Heaven he may continue to be so now we have occasion for it. But since our great losses, we are no longer in a condition to pay our rent; and often those who have shewn us the greatest kindness, whilst we owed them nothing, look upon us with a very different eye when they think they are in danger of losing by us.

*Jenny.* Our landlord, I am sure, is not a man of this sort.

*Mar.* I hope he is not, child, or we shall be much to be pitied.

*Jenny.* I long for my father's return to hear the good news. Will he be back this morning?

*Mar.* He went out at sun rise, and I expect him back every minute.

*Jenny,*

*Jenny, (resting her hand on the table.)* Then before I breakfast, I will go and draw some beer to refresh him ; he will be glad of a draught after his walk.

*Mar.* No, no, eat your bread ; I will take care of that myself.

*Jenny.* You asked me just now whether I would work for my father and mother, and now you prevent my doing so.

*Mar.* Do as you will then ; I will not deprive you of this pleasure: your father, I know, will repay you with his caresses.

*Jenny.* And I do not know which of us is the best pleased when I deserve them ; and I will do my best to do so.

### SCENE III.

*Martha alone.*

My dear children, Heaven is my witness, it is chiefly on your account that I dread poverty, and yet it is from you that I receive the greatest comfort. How much more ought I to love you, since you are the only blessing that is left me. Had I never been unfortunate, I should never have had those proofs of your affection. Perhaps also you will assist me in conquering my grief, whilst I am only striving to hide it from you. No, I will not interrupt, by my murmurings,  
the



the innocent gaiety of your tender age. (*She runs to the cradle, takes out the infant, and presses it in her arms, looking at it with tenderness.*) It is to thee alone that I will utter my complaints; to thee who art as yet insensible to the sorrows of thy parents. I may shed tears in thy presence without fearing to afflict thee. Happy infant, I weep for thy lot, whilst thou answerest me with a smile.

## SCENE IV.

*Martha, Jenny.*

*Jenny, (coming in just as Martha has the child in her arms.)* Give it to me, mother, that I may kiss it. My little friend, when you are as able as I am, you shall work for your father and mother too. Oh, you shall see what care I will take of this little baby, that it may become strong and robust. But stay, we are busy at present, you must go sleep a little. (*She puts it back into the cradle, whilst the mother looks affectionately at them both.*) Mother, I have just brought the beer: will you lend me the key of the cupboard, that I may fetch some clean linen and a waistcoat for my father: I know he will return overcome with heat and fatigue.

*Mar.* Aye, and if he has any good news  
he

he will not care how much he fatigues himself, in order to hasten to us with it.

*Jenny, (shutting the cupboard, and laying the linen on a chair,)* I know it; and then without resting he will go to the field: he never loses a moment.

*Mar.* This is a good lesson for us; you, for example, would do well to hasten your breakfast and go to school, as soon as you have asked your father's blessing.

*Jenny.* To school! Oh, no, I shall not go there now.

*Mar.* What do you say, Jenny? Do you not mean to learn to read and write? No, no, my child, I hope, however we may be reduced, to be always able to afford you this instruction, though I should be forced to stint myself in common necessities for it.

*Jenny.* But there will be no occasion for any more expence on that account. Does not my brother Valentine read as fluently as our schoolmaster at his desk? He will be master to Lucy and me; he told me so this morning. Sister, said he, you know that I am allowed half an hour's rest after dinner before I return to work; well then, if you will, during that time, begin a lesson with me, I will finish it when I come home in the evening. You have nothing to do but to apply

ply diligently, and I'll answer for it, you will soon be the best scholar in the village. Let us begin to-day, and you shall see.

*Mar.* Now, was this Valentine's own thought?

*Jenny.* Yes, his own indeed, mother; it would never have come into my head. It is I, said he, who have cost my parents the most, being the eldest; had they spent less on me they would have had the money for you, my sisters; I ought, therefore, to give you back the instruction that I have received, now that our father cannot afford it you.

*Mar.* Alas, could we have known at the time that we were providing masters for him, that he would one day have wanted necessities! He has cost us something, it is true, in his education, but I do not regret it; the money has been well laid out: Valentine is grateful, and does his best to give us proofs of it.

#### SCENE V.

*Martha, Jenny, Lucy.*

*Lucy, (jumping.)* Here he is, here he is!

*Mar.* Who, Lucy?

*Lucy.* My father: he is just come.

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Jenny, Lucy.*

*Mar. (running to meet him with open arms.)*

Ah, my dear friend!

*Jenny, (taking his hand.)* My dear father!

*Lucy.* How glad I am to see you.

*Tho.* Good morning to you, my dear; good morning to you, children.

*Mar.* Are not you sadly tired with your walk?

*Tho.* No, I feel myself quite nimble: but, my poor Martha, you look sorrowful; I see you have been weeping.

*Mar.* It is true; but do not be uneasy at that, for they were tears of pleasure at having such dutiful children. If you did but know how much satisfaction they have given me this morning on your account!

*Tho.* These are sweet words to me: there is not a greater happiness when we do our own duty than to see it done by those who belong to us. As I went to the Squire's this morning, my heart filled with your idea; now I return home and find my wife and children wholly engrossed by mine. What comfort is this?

*Mar.* Will you take any thing? Will  
you

you change your dress? Jenny has provided every thing for you.

*Tho.* No, I thank you, there is no occasion; the thought of it alone is sufficient refreshment to me. (*Kissing Jenny.*)

*Mar.* Well, you have seen our landlord; how did he receive you?

*Tho.* As I expected: he has a feeling and good heart. He is a man, Martha, of the highest honour and humanity.

*Mar.* Indeed! did he compassionate our misfortunes? Tell me all.

*Tho.* As soon as he was informed of my arrival, without making me wait a moment, he came out to me, and took me into his best parlour.

*Jenny.* Into his best parlour!

*Tho.* Yes, Jenny; he was drinking coffee with his lady, and they ordered a ham on the same table for me; and Madam was so good as to cut me a slice.

*Jenny.* What, Madam herself?

*Tho.* Yes, indeed, with her own hands, and in so obliging a manner—

*Mar.* Oh, the dear lady!

*Tho.* They would not let me speak about business till I had finished my breakfast.

*Mar.* How charming is this! and then—

*Tho.*



*Tho.* Well then, my good Thorowgood, said Mr. Parks, what news? Very bad, answered I; I have lost all my cattle in the space of eight days, by a disease brought on by the drought of the season. I am ruined, and I am come to inform you of it, that you may be at liberty to let your farm to another tenant. I come also to offer you all that I have left in the world: it is a great trouble to me that I have not sufficient to satisfy you; but I promise, on the word of an honest man, to labour night and day till I can do so. I shall eat of the bread of bitterness till I have paid my debt to the utmost farthing.

*Mar.* Oh, certainly, we will do it readily. What did Mr. Parks say to this?

*Tho.* I was already acquainted with your losses, honest Thorowgood, said he, and am heartily sorry for them. I pity you also, said Madam, with her sweet voice: I pity you with all my heart.

*Mar.* The worthy couple! how good they are!

*Tho.* I do not come here, said I, to excite compassion, I have no occasion for it, as I am able to work. My great concern is, that I cannot acquit myself of my debt to you: I own I feel for my wife and

B

my

my young family: I who would have shed my blood to preserve them from want! You who are rich and without children, know not what it is to see those suffer to whom we have given life. Ah! if you had such children as I have; if you loved them with all your soul, and were beloved by them as I am!—In saying this, grief made me hide my face; and when I lifted up my eyes again, I saw Mr. Parks was no longer looking at me: he had turned towards his wife; their eyes were filled with tears, and fixed on each other. Pity was not the only sentiment which then affected them; I plainly saw that something which more nearly concerned themselves, occupied their minds.

*Mar.* And did you not ask them what it was?

*Tho.* I had not the courage; but as I continued to talk of my children, Mr. Parks strove to change the discourse. I perceived clearly that some private affliction was the cause of this, and therefore hastened to quit the subject, and began talking about my corn, and reckoning how much it would yield towards paying my rent.

*Mar.* And pray, was not Mr. Parks very angry when he found it fall so short of that sum?

*Tho.*

*Tho.* Quite the contrary ; he bid me not despair. Go home to your wife, said the good gentleman, I will order my horse and be with you presently, when we will settle every thing. I have always looked upon you as an honest man, therefore I will do nothing in this business without your concurrence.

*Mar.* Is this possible ? how much do we owe him ?

*Tho.* Four hundred and fifty pounds.

*Mar.* Alas, alas, how shall we be ever able to pay this money !

*Tho.* It is true ; and yet had we saved our cattle, and our crops had answered this year, we should have had enough, and something over.

*Mar.* But as it is, what will become of us ?

*Tho.* Why all that we can do now, is to collect together our household goods and farming utensils, and sell them to pay our landlord : we will keep nothing but what is on our backs ; we can then shew ourselves before him with a clear conscience. This is the only course that we can take to avoid misery. (*Somebody knocks softly at the door.*)

*Jenny, (going to the door.)* I think I heard a knock at the door. Yes, I see some one.

(*She comes back and speaks in a low voice.*) It is Mr. Pinch.

*Tho.* Mr. Pinch! What does he want with me, I wonder? we have never had any quarrel.

*Mar.* I shudder with fear. We are undone, my dear Thorowgood. We shall be taken to jail. I know the steward; some mischief is sure to happen wherever he interferes.

*Tho.* Compose yourself, wife; we have nothing to fear. Take away the children, and leave me alone with him.

*Mar.* What do you mean? I must stay with you.

*Tho.* No, no, leave us together; knave as he is, I am not afraid of him. You only vex me by staying: go, I beg of you.

*Mar.* Since you insist upon it, I must obey. (*She retires, taking Jenny and Lucy in her hand. The steward meets them by the way and bows; the little girls appear frightened, and cling to their mother as she goes out.*)

## SCENE VII.

*Steward, Thorowgood.*

*Stew.* Thorowgood, did not I see you on the road to the Squire's just now?

*Tho.*

*Tho.* Very likely ; in fact, I am just returned from thence. I have been with my landlord to give up to him the state of my affairs.

*Stew.* What ! without consulting me, have you settled matters together.

*Tho.* No, not yet.

*Stew.* So much the better. I am come to offer my services, and to put you in a method to defend yourself against him.

*Tho.* Against him ! Pray was it not Mr. Parks who gave you the place that you hold ? Do not you serve him ?

*Stew.* I allow it, therefore I should not chuse to be seen openly in this business ; my design is to support you secretly. I can recommend you a lawyer of this town, by whose means you shall be the gainer where you expect to lose : you understand me. He is one of those we call a shrewd, knavish, fellow : trust to him, he'll settle the business for you : he is my friend.

*Tho.* A knavish fellow and your friend ! I should have guessed so. Only see the force of sympathy.

*Stew.* You must not take things so literally : I mean that he is a man capable of bringing you safe out of your embarrassments, and the present juncture is very fa-



vousable to you ; this year having proved ruinous to the farmers in many places, will easily account for your becoming bankrupt.

*Tho.* I shall have nothing to do with your plan, Sir, but shall pay my landlord my full debt whenever fortune enables me.

*Stew.* You despise the law then, though it offers you its assistance.

*Tho.* No, I do not despise it, but I think a man's conscience should be his just law : and if I make a bargain which is not contrary to that, I think honour obliges me to stand to it, even though the law might discharge me from it.

*Stew.* Take my word for it, neither your honour or conscience will suffer in this business : it is not your fault that you have had those losses.

*Tho.* How do you know that? perhaps I was to blame to purchase so many cattle at once ; had I bought but the half, my loss would not have been so great, and I should have had money enough left to pay my rent.

*Stew.* And be it your fault or not, the thing is done now. And are you aware of what you expose yourself to, when you leave all to the discretion of Mr. Parks? Why he has it in his power to throw you into prison.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* And if he has that power, why should I seek to take it from him? and if he means to treat me with humanity, why rob him of that pleasure?

*Stew.* Well, suppose he should not prove rigorous, he is mortal, you know; and his heirs may not be so tractable; whereas, if you follow my advice, you may secure yourself from accidents, and procure a final acquittance of the debt.

*Tho.* What! can your lawyer make my landlord believe that he is paid before he has received his just due?

*Stew.* No; but after having made himself acquainted with your affairs, he can settle them much to your advantage, and put some money in your pocket besides; you understand me.

*Tho.* I do not want his assistance for this; I can make the matter as clear to my landlord myself; he knows very well the misfortunes which have reduced me. I cannot now pass for a man of property.

*Stew.* Very true, but one ought always to do things by rule. Now this lawyer whom I recommend, is one of the best in the country in managing a business of this sort: besides, I mean myself to lend you every assistance in my power.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* I cannot imagine what may be your motive for acting in this manner so much against the Squire's interest, unless it is because he appears willing to settle my affairs without consulting you, and so deprive you of the perquisites of your office.

*Stew.* What perquisites?

*Tho.* Come, come, we know how most stewards make their fortunes. You all love to fish in troubled waters.

*Stew.* Nay, you talk at random. I only mean to be your friend in this. Put your affair into my hands and those of my friend; we will settle them, I'll answer for it.

*Tho.* I do not doubt it. And so, Mr. Pinch, you think I will let you, to whom I owe nothing, have the fingering of my money, in order to defraud my landlord, to whom I owe so much; besides the many obligations that I have to him for his constant goodness to me.

*Stew.* Why, you will not be the less his debtor for this; all your effects are not sufficient to clear your account with him. Now if you take my advice, you may preserve a part, and all that you earn hereafter will be your own.

*Tho.* I cannot see the thing in this light; I am determined to give up all that I have

to my landlord; and whatever I can save hereafter, I will lay by to pay the remainder of my debt to him.

*Stew.* Is it your design then to exhaust your strength by labour, without reaping the profit? Do you mean to pass your whole life in working for others?

*Tho.* (*with emotion.*) You do not know the pleasure which a man has in being satisfied with himself. With what tears of joy shall I, from time to time, carry to Mr. Parks the fruits of my industry! What happiness shall I experience in having it in my power to prove my gratitude, and to convince him that he was not deceived, when he took me for an honest man, and that when I lost my little fortune, I did not lose my probity also!

*Stew.* Ah, Thorowgood, Thorowgood, I see you do not know your own interest.

*Tho.* You mean, that I do not promote yours. Do you think that I am to be made thus the dupe to your avarice? You want to draw me into a knavish act, in order to reap the profit of it yourself. Why do you not go to my landlord, and offer him your services against me? It is because you know he has too much goodness to seek my ruin, and yet you thought that I might be ungrateful enough to deprive him of his just due.

due. No, Mr. Pinch, you may, if you please, forget your obligations to him; for my part, I shall remember mine as long as I live. I have had no occasion for you hitherto, and I think I shall be able to do without you in future. Go then, and seek clients elsewhere for your roguish friends.

*Stew.* What, do you dare to abuse me? Do you know that I can, soon or late, make you feel my vengeance?

*Tho.* You ought rather to dread mine, if I were to lay your secret practices open to Mr. Parks.

*Stew.* Oh, good Thorowgood, let me entreat you—

*Tho.* Be gone for a poltroon as you are: I am as incapable of using my advantage over you, as of taking your advice. (*Steward retires in confusion.*)

## SCENE VIII.

*Thorowgood.*

These are the men who ought to promote peace in the country, and they often seek to sow divisions. It is such as these who are the ruin of the peasants, by plunging them into law-suits: instead of acting as a mediator between the rich and poor, their only aim is to estrange them from each other.

Where



Where is the gentleman who would not have a pleasure in treating his tenants with humanity, if he did but know, that in return he was regarded as a friend and father? Oh, Mr. Parks, be you such to me! it is more than my own destiny that I give into your hands, it is that of my wife and children also.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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A C T II.

SCENE I.

*Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* No, I tell you, Martha, we have nothing to fear from the steward; I can assure you, he is more afraid of me at this very instant, than ever I shall be of him.

*Mar.* Well, I believe you would not deceive me, unless it be to quiet my uneasiness.

*Tho.* Be satisfied then; I have some good news for you. I thought that Humphries had lost all his cattle as well as I; but upon casting my eye over our garden, I saw on the other side the hedge four fine cows grazing in the meadow below.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* But what then?

*Tho.* You must know there is a bargain between us, which gives me a right to two of those beasts.

*Mar.* How is that?

*Tho.* I will tell you: when the disease first broke out amongst our cattle, I saw Humphries was quite cast down by it; as I had always hitherto been more fortunate than he, I offered to do all in my power to serve him. He thanked me in so affecting a manner, that I wished to give him some proof of my good will to him upon the spot. You must know, just before the disorder appeared, we had made a joint purchase of twelve cows at a neighbouring fair. It is true, I advanced two-thirds of the money; but upon his consenting to graze them for a certain time on his farm, (which was an excellent bargain for him in point of money, as we settled it) I told him that whatever of the herd should escape the mortality, we would divide equally between us. At that time I had no reason to think that this arrangement would turn out in my favour; and now, though it has, I should be far from taking advantage of it if it regarded myself alone; but I am no longer master of my own. I am obliged to give up all my remain-  
ing

ing property to my landlord. I should, therefore, think myself guilty of a theft, if I did not, on this account, lay claim to every thing due to me.

*Mar.* And have you seen Humphries since our losses?

*Tho.* No, but I just now sent our son George through the garden gate after him. Sec, he is come back already.

## SCENE II.

*Thoroughgood, Martha, George.*

*Tho.* Well, son, what does Humphries say?

*Geo.* That he does not know what I am talking about, nor what you have to do with his cows.

*Tho. (surprized.)* You certainly must have made some mistake in your message.

*Geo.* No, no, father; I told him the whole matter clearly as you ordered me; and he understood me so well, that he repeated word for word with the steward who was with him on a visit: besides, he is coming to speak to you himself.

*Tho.* That is well; we shall settle matters at the first word. Humphries knows, as well as I do, what we promised each other.

C

*Mar.*

*Mar.* Have you any written agreement between you?

*Tho.* I do not want it, wife. Can one with better security than a man's word? When that fails, there is an end of all integrity.

*Mar.* You imagine all the world like yourself; but ah, my good friend, when interest is in the case—

*Tho.* What do you mean? I will never believe my neighbour capable of such villainy. I have always looked upon him as an honest man; but here he comes: you will see every thing will be explained. (*To George.*) You may return to your work, George, I do not want you.

*Geo.* Very well, father.

### SCENE III.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Humphries.*

*Tho.* I am glad you are come, Humphries; I'll lay a wager George has made some confusion between us.

*Hum.* Indeed I believe so; I was not able to comprehend a word of what he said to me. He told me that you had sent him to fetch my cows.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* No, I ordered him to demand mine of you.

*Hum.* Your cows?

*Tho.* Yes, those that I saw in the meadow. Have not you saved four?

*Hum.* Without doubt. But how came they to be yours?

*Tho.* Two of those belong to me. Did not we pass our words to each other to divide between us amicably whatever should be left after the disease?

*Hum.* (*in confusion.*) But, Thorowgood—

*Tho.* No evasions, Humphries, tell me plainly; was not this agreed between us?

*Hum.* I cannot deny it, neighbour; but one says many things that one does not always stand to. Do but consider my situation; to have so fine a herd of cattle as I had, and to save but four of them!

*Tho.* I am much more to be pitied for being under the necessity of asking them of you. When we made the bargain, which of us was most likely to be the gainer by it? Had not I the greatest number of cows? Did not I agree to it out of kindness to you? and did not you yourself look upon it in that light?

*Hum.* To be sure, neighbour; but after so great a loss—

*Tho.* I see, then, the extent of your integrity



grity. You are one of those honest men who can walk uprightly as long as prosperity holds, but stumble at the first step if fortune change ever so little. I find, my wife knew you better than I did; and I plainly see that we must not depend too much on the rectitude of others.

*Hum.* But Mr. Pinch assures me that the law does not bind me to the bargain.

*Tho.* I have nothing farther to say to you if you consult the chicane of the law before your conscience. I was once your friend, and that restrains me from publicly exposing your dishonesty. Go, I give you up your cattle; I should never have claimed them for myself alone, it was on Mr. Park's account; but I must work a year the longer for him: you may go, I acquit you of your promise.

*Hum.* (*in a despairing accent.*) Ah, Thoroughgood, you stab me to the heart!

#### SCENE IV.

*Thoroughgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* (*hiding his face between his hands.*) I could never have expected this from a man whom I looked upon as one of my best friends.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* Come, cheer up, my good man, it is now my turn to be the comforter.

*Tho.* Ah, Martha, I can bear up against the losses of fortune, but not against those of friendship!

*Mar.* Be comforted, we shall find friends, I will answer for it, more to be depended on. See, here comes Robert, our rich neighbour: perhaps he has something to propose for our good.

## SCENE V.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Meadows.*

*Mead.* Good morrow, Thorowgood; well, how goes it?

*Tho.* Bad enough truly, neighbour; you know, I suppose, that I am ruined?

*Mead.* Yes, I have just been told of it; and this is the reason why I am come to see you.

*Tho.* I am now worth nothing.

*Mead.* How so? have you not a fine field of wheat, of which you may make many a good pound? If you mean to sell it, I am your man; I will buy it as it is, and pay the money down; what say you?

*Tho.* If you have a mind to it, so much the better; my landlord will be here this morning, and you may settle the matter with him. I will not interfere in your bargain.

*Mead.* I have nothing to do with Mr. Parks ; the wheat is yours.

*Tho.* It did, indeed, belong to me a few days ago, but it is not mine now.

*Mead.* (*with surprise.*) How ! have you sold it to him then ?

*Tho.* No, but since my losses, being no longer in a condition to pay, I have given him up all that I possess.

*Mead.* Are you mad, Thorowgood ? why you have the law on your side ; till your grain is made over to your landlord, by some security, it belongs to you, and you may do what you please with it. Come, come, you have lost too much already ; ask Martha what she thinks of the matter ?

*Mar.* Why, I think that we ought, in the first place, to pay our debts, at any rate ; if we have lost our cattle, our landlord has not gained by it ; the loss, therefore, is our affair, not his.

*Mead.* But you must not carry this so far as to deprive yourself of bread. You ought to keep something in reserve to be above want.

*Tho.* (*looking severely at him.*) What, at the expence of our good landlord !

*Mead.* But he is so rich ! When you have given up all to him, it will be no more in his

his pocket than a crown-piece would be to you.

*Tho.* Why I believe he could do without it ; but that is no reason that I should take it from him.

*Mar.* But do not you know what a generous and compassionate man he is?

*Tho.* For this very reason I ought to be the more fair in my dealings with him.

*Mar.* What ! would you have us use him ill, because he treats others well?

*Tho.* Fye, fye, neighbour ! it would be infamous.

*Mead.* Come, come, do not be so stiff ; take my advice ; it depends all on the manner in which we see things. There is no doubt but your landlord would do you a kindness ; but to make that matter sure, do one to yourself. Do you want to be one amongst the number of the poor that he relieves ?

*Tho.* He will not have that pleasure long, if all his tenants take your advice.

*Mead.* You are an obstinate man, and I lose my time talking to you. I have but one word more to say : Will you sell me your wheat ; yes, or no ?

*Tho.* (*with a smile of contempt.*) Ha, I understood now what you would be at, and why

why you interest yourself so much in my affairs. Hark ye, you are a rich fellow, and this would be a convenient bargain to you; but I have a better scheme than this to propose to you.

*Mead.* Now you speak reason; let us hear.

*Tho.* I expect my landlord here every minute; he always carries about him a well-furnished purse, a gold watch, and some rings of value. Suppose you and I wait for him at the corner of the grove, and rob him of them; it would be no bad adventure this.

*Mead.* (*starting back.*) What do you mean, Thorowgood?

*Tho.* Why, he is so rich, the loss to him will be no more than a crown would be to us.

*Mead.* Aye, but the gallows!

*Tho.* Aye, that alone restrains you: but if I were to judge you, Meadows, I would let you see that you do not deserve it the less for what you have just now proposed to me. I see no difference, for my part, between robbing a man of his money, or robbing him of the fruits of his land.

*Mead.* Oh, there is a great difference in the two cases.

*Tho.* There may be so; but if you will reflect a little, I am of opinion, you will think as I do.

*Mead.*



*Mead.* I do not desire it, indeed; there is little to be got by this way of reasoning. Come, come, Thorowgood, consider your own interest a little better: your landlord will have great obligations to you, to be sure, when you have reduced yourself to want on his account: he will only despise you, and treat you the worse for it.

*Tho.* If his heart were like yours, I should have reason to fear this.

*Mead.* And pray what harm have I done you? but you are an obstinate man. I wish to preserve your family from want; it is you that are the hard-hearted man, and will be guilty of all their sufferings, and, perhaps, their death. I only desire to give you your own price for your wheat; that is, if you are reasonable; and here is the money.

*Tho.* (*seizing him by the arm.*) Meadows, I have lost in eight days all that I am worth, and am reduced to the last farthing; but if ever I am guilty of a dishonest action, even to supply my most urgent necessities, (*pulling off his hat,*) may Heaven strike me dead with its thunder!

*Mead.* (*with a smile of contempt.*) Very well. No matter what becomes of your wife and children, leave them to beg their bread, whilst you enjoy on your dunghill, the pleasure of  
hearing

hearing yourself called—the worthy Thorowgood, the honest man.

*Tho.* And that is what you will never hear said of yourself. Thou wretch! thou hast more money than thou knowest what to do with; and yet, in your eagerness to amass more, you want to cheat others, and to make me a knave like yourself. (*He takes him by the shoulders.*) Get out of my house this instant, before I knock you down. (*Turns him out.*)

## SCENE VI.

*Martha, Thorowgood.*

*Tho.* I never in my life saw a more impudent rogue. He knows how much I abhor all sort of dishonesty, and yet he comes seriously to propose a downright robbery to me: he would not have done this when my affairs were in a better state. Poverty is indeed terrible, when it exposes us to such affronts as these. O Martha, never let us be shaken by the miseries of our situation! the poorer we are, the more rigid must be our integrity.

*Mar.* Otherwise it will be thought that we were only respected for our riches.

*Tho.* This is my comfort in the midst of my troubles. Let us not attend, Martha, to what

what others say, we have occasion only for ourselves. (*A noise at the door.*) Who knocks? Cannot I have a moment's peace?

## SCENE VII.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Hearty.*

*Hearty.* Good morrow, good folks.

*Tho. (going hastily up to him.)* What do you want, farmer? are you come to propose some piece of knavery to me?

*Hear. (calmly.)* I, Thorowgood! Did you ever hear any thing of that kind from me?

*Tho. (throwing himself into his arms.)* No, never, never; forgive me; it was the remains of my indignation which transported me. Did you know what has happened to me within this hour, you would excuse me for distrusting all mankind. The servant of my landlord wants me to commit a fraud; my friend has repaid my kindness with ingratitude; and the richest man in the village would barter my honesty for a trifling gain.

*Hear.* Think no more of these wretches; if they choose to make a trade of doing ill, you are too good to disturb yourself about them. Hear me: I have but two words to say: I know that it is not in your power to  
pay

pay Squire Parks; it is at present impossible for me to advance the sum that you want; but try to obtain time of your landlord; I will be answerable for it; he shall have my security.

*Mar. (to Thorowgood, who seems immovable with surprise.)* See, husband, what goodness! *(To Harty.)* O my dear neighbour, how came you by so saving a thought for us?

*Hear.* It was a very natural one: I said to myself, the kind hearted Thorowgood was always ready, to the utmost of his power, to give his assistance to others; it would be hard, indeed, if he should find no one in his turn to assist him; and I therefore am come—

*Mar. (apart.)* It seems as if Heaven had sent him to our succour.

*Hear.* Why, Thorowgood, art thou dumb? *(holding out his hand.)*

*Tho. (seizing him by the hand, and pressing it between his.)* Ah, my dear friend, Harty, I am not silent from insensibility; I feel your kindness at the bottom of my heart, but I cannot accept it.

*Hear.* And why not? it will not be useless to you. However well Mr. Parks may be disposed towards you, he will be still better pleased when he has my security for your debt.

*Tho.* But who will be my security to you?

*Hear.*

*Hear.* Your own probity, industry, and ingenuity.

*Tho.* And yet you see to what I am reduced; one bad year has ruined me: a second of the same sort may add your ruin to mine.

*Hear.* No matter, I will run the risque.

*Tho.* But I will not suffer it: it is enough that my family suffers by me without seeing my friends do so also. I should never more enjoy a moment's peace. Every fog, every cloud, the least storm of wind, would cast terror into my heart.

*Hear.* (*with urgency.*) My dear Thorowgood, if you did but know how much you afflict me by your refusal! Will you, then, let me do nothing for you?

*Tho.* You have done enough in thus comforting my afflicted heart; it is torn to pieces; but the tears which I now see in your eyes are as balm to its wounds. O, my good friend, though it is a sad thing to become an object of pity, yet there is a wide difference between being pitied, and being ill spoken of! Thanks be to heaven, you will never have cause to regret having known me. In whatever place we meet, I shall never have occasion to draw my hat over my face, or turn aside my head, to avoid the shame of blushing in your presence.

D

*Hear.*



*Hear.* The more you resist, the more my friendship increases; and you are so cruel, you will not give me yours in return.

*Tho.* Think well of it, I beseech you: I know your slender means. Should I be your friend, were I to plunge you into difficulties, in order to draw myself out of them? No, no, my good neighbour, I am as yet guilty of the ruin of no one; and it shall never be said that I will become so. As long as I live I will sleep with a clear conscience. It is this which converts the mat of straw into a bed of down.

*Hear.* I will press you no more; I feel that I am not worthy to put an end to your troubles; Providence, no doubt, reserves that for itself. All I ask, is, that you will depend on me next to Providence; and my hands, and my little fortune, you shall always find at your service. Farewell. (*He goes out; Thoroughgood conducts him to the door, pressing his hand.*)

## SCENE VIII.

*Thoroughgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* I have a friend then, my dear Martha; I rejoice, however, that he has left me. I might, perhaps, have yielded to his entreaties

ties from the fear of afflicting him. We are delivered then from a great temptation, but we must prevent his return. Come, my wife, we must act with spirit, let us assemble together all our effects against Squire Parks's coming. I would not have him think that we had deliberated for a moment in doing our duty.

## END OF THE SECOND ACT.

## ACT III.

*(Household furniture appears dispersed in different parts of the room, and a heap of clothes and linen on a large table.)*

## SCENE I.

*Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* Come, courage, Martha; keep up your spirits till we have finished our business.

*Mar.* I believe it is now all done.

*Tho.* How! is this all that we have to give to our landlord? I never wished so much to have our little stock of necessaries in good

order about us as I do at the instant that I am going to be deprived of them. Have you searched in every corner?

*Mar.* Yes, my dear, I turned over every drawer in the cupboard.

*Tho.* (*taking breath.*) I feel myself the lighter for all this; these things were like a load on my heart, which almost stifled it.

*Mar.* You must be sadly fatigued; you had better take a draught of beer to refresh you.

*Tho.* Put some for us both into this cup.  
(*He takes a silver tankard off the table.*)

*Mar.* (*having filled it with beer.*) What is the matter with you; your hand trembles?

*Tho.* Nothing at all; but it is so many years since this piece of plate has been in our family.

*Mar.* It does not go out of it now, however, in a bad cause.

*Tho.* My grandfather bequeathed it to his eldest grandson; but I, alas! shall not be able to leave it to mine.

*Mar.* Your last blessing will be the more pure for this.

*Tho.* Yes, I shall have that consolation,  
(*After drinking he shews the tankard to his wife.*)  
See here, the first letter of your name, which I had engraved with mine.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* Well, my dear, this cypher is no reproach to us; we ourselves have been yet more united.

*Tho.* And we will be so always, though this were the last time that we should drink together. Here, my dear wife; *(he gives the tankard to Martha, and whilst she lifts it to her mouth with a sigh)* come, we must now put all these things in order; let us begin with my wedding suit. *(He takes it off the table and displays it, looking at it attentively.)* How happy I was, Martha, the first time I put this on, when I took you to church! and how often has the sight of it brought back to my mind agreeable remembrances! I never opened that cupboard without looking at it, and I never looked at it without thinking with pleasure on the day of our marriage: it gives me pleasure now for another reason.

*Mar.* For what, my dear?

*Tho.* For having preserved it so well, that it will help a little towards paying our debts: see, it is in very good condition yet: they do not wear these great sleeves and large plaits now; they did not spare stuff at that time of day; and I am glad of it: why here is almost enough to make two such as are worn now.

*Mar.* Here is mine also; let us put them together,

together, and I shall beg of our landlord to let them both be sold at the same time; it would grieve me to have them separated.

*Tho.* Do not be so superstitious; suppose they were, my dear, what then? would our hearts be divided by that?

*Mar.* No, Thorowgood, I have no fear of that; it is not superstition, my dear husband; it is a —, I don't know what to call it; but I should rather they were to remain together.

*Tho.* Come, come, make yourself easy, Mr. Parks will, I dare say, indulge this little weakness of yours. (*He lays his hand on a little bundle, neatly wrapped in a linen cloth.*) What bundle is this?

*Mar.* It is Valentine's: you know it is the linen and jewels which we found with him in his cradle; look at them, they seem to be of great value.

*Tho.* (*perceiving that Martha begins to undo the bundle, stops her.*) Hold, Martha, we have no right to this, nor has our landlord any claim to it; it belongs to Valentine; if he were our son, the case would be different; put it back into the box, we will speak to Mr. Parks about it.

*Mar.* Provided he will take our words!

*Tho.* I have no fear of that; he is just  
and



and sensible ; and when I relate the circumstance, to him, he will be of our opinion.

## SCENE II.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Lucy.*

*Lucy. (bringing in a bundle of clothes in her arms.)* Here, father, here are my Sunday clothes, and these are Jenny's ; shall I put them on the table ?

*Tho.* Yes, child, by those of your father and mother.

*Mar. (with tears in her eyes.)* Oh, my poor children, how sorry I am for you !

*Tho.* No, Martha, we ought to rejoice, not grieve for them now. Should we weep for their being good children ? *(embracing Lucy tenderly.)* Tell me, would you wish to keep these clothes ?

*Lucy.* Certainly, if you could keep yours too ; but since you are obliged to give yours to our landlord, I will also do the same. Do not you owe him all you have ?

*Tho.* All, my child.

*Lucy.* I am sure I had rather always go in a ragged frock, than that people should say, see how flaunting Lucy is dressed ; but it is at other people's expence.

*Tho.* Right, my dear child ; this is thinking

ing as you ought ; preserve these sentiments, and you will never be unhappy, nor will your courage ever be cast down.

*Mar.* Your father is in the right : never fear, we will work night and day before you and your sister shall want.

*Lucy.* And we, in our turns, will do our best that you shall not want.

*Th.* In thus assisting each other, I hope, we shall be able to bring ourselves out of this unfortunate situation ; but should we not, we shall at least have nothing to reproach ourselves with : no man on earth will dare to despise us, or look down upon you. When we are dead, they may tell you, it is true, that your parents were poor, but never that they were dishonest. You need not blush when you shed tears over their graves : no one will push you back whilst they trample on them, with indignation, before your face.

*Lucy.* I will go and see, father, if I have forgotten nothing. When Jenny has done, we shall have something else to bring you.

### SCENE III.

*Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* Why, Martha, what still cast down ? Shall our children be more courageous than we ? We possess all their love ; but do not

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let us lessen it by giving them cause to esteem us less. They know that it is not our bad conduct which has brought these misfortunes upon us ; but if we suffer ourselves to be overcome by a weak despair, we shall appear faulty to them. Come, let us think no more of our troubles than as they have given us occasion to feel the comfort which our children have given us.

*Mar.* Yes, my dear, it is the sweetest that a mother can feel. Could I ever have expected to see them so sensible and good, at so early an age ?

*Tho.* And why not, Martha ? Could I ever doubt that a woman like thee, would not bring my children up as worthy as herself ? They will be the staff of our old age ; when decrepit with years, we may rest assuredly upon them. But I hear Valentine's voice ; I have something important to say to him.—Martha, shall I beg of thee to leave me alone with him a little ?

*Mar.* Why do you ask it ? Am not I as much concerned as you in every thing that regards him ? Do you believe that he is less dear to me than to you ?

*Tho.* It is for this reason that I wish you to be away just now ; it is your tenderness for him that I dread.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* You make me tremble : what can this secret be ? Is it any misfortune that has befallen him ?

*Tho.* No, my dear, on the contrary, it is concerning his good fortune that I am now going to speak to him.

*Mar.* And are you afraid that I should be witness to this ?

*Tho.* Well, then, stay if you will ; but you must promise me not to contradict what I shall say : if you love him, and wish his good, you must acquiesce in whatever I propose to him.

*Mar.* But why did not you before entrust me with your designs ?

*Tho.* Here he comes ; you shall hear them in his presence.

#### SCENE IV.

*Thorswgood, Martha, Valentine.*

*Valen.* Good morrow, father, I am come to see if you are returned safe.

*Tho.* Yes, son, as you see.

*Valen.* And how were you received by the Squire ?

*Tho.* As well as I could wish : he is not one of those haughty and unfeeling men, who will scarcely allow us poor people to be their fellow

fellow creatures. He will come here presently ; and you see what I have prepared to give up to him towards my debt.

*Valen.* What, do you mean to strip yourself, in one moment, of all that you have earned by hard labour ?

*Tho.* This is not the greatest sacrifice that I must make to-day, I must endure a loss which will go much nearer to my heart.

*Valen.* What have you to lose more ?

*Tho.* Alas, it is thyself, Valentine ! thee whom I have ever loved so tenderly.

*Valen.* Me, father !

*Mar.* (*with emotion.*) What do you say ?

*Tho.* Since the word has passed my lips, I must repeat it ; yes, my child, we must part.

*Valen.* But why do you drive me from your presence ? Have I given you any cause of complaint ?

*Mar.* Oh, never, never ! you know it too, Thorowgood ; no son was ever more submissive, or more tender towards his parents.

*Tho.* And I, Martha, am as ready as you to declare this. Yes, Valentine, you have done for us a hundred times more than we had a right to expect. I love you with all the tenderness of a real father ; but, nevertheless, you know that I am not yours.

Had



Had we continued in prosperity, you should have always been our son, our dear son ; all my other children believe you to be their brother. I meant, after my death, that you should have shared with them the little substance which you have daily helped me to increase. This hope was a comfort to my heart, but it is destroyed ; nothing now is left us, not even the distant prospect of a re-establishment.

*Valen.* And is this the moment which you have chosen to cast me from amongst the number of your children ?

*Tho.* Yes, I ought to do so ; the ties of blood bind them to our lot, whatever it be ; if we suffer, they ought to suffer with us ; but you, what right have I to involve you in my distresses ? No, Valentine, I advise you as a friend ; and if it must be, I command you as a father to quit an unfortunate family. It is time that you should do something for yourself ; since it is no longer in my power to give you a fortune, I rejoice that I have had you so well instructed as to enable you to gain one.

*Valen.* You must not remind me of these obligations, if you wish to have me abandon you ; I must first forget them myself : you saved my life in my infancy ; your wife  
nourished

nourished me with her milk ; you have bred me up, and educated me without expecting any recompence ; and you command me to be ungrateful for all these benefits.

*Tho.* I have only acquitted myself to you as one man ought to another. Should not I have been a monster, had I left you to perish ?

*Valen.* And yet you would have me prove myself one, by withdrawing from you my assistance when you most want it.

*Tho.* You know me, Valentine ; you know that I should be ashamed to live at the expence of another.

*Valen.* My life, then, to this moment has been a very shameful one ; have not I hitherto subsisted by you alone ?

*Tho.* But have not you sufficiently repaid me by your labour ?

*Valen.* My hands, it is true, have repaid what your hands have done for me ; but my heart has not yet repaid your love. O my father, recall to your remembrance the first days of my infancy, when I was as a stranger in your family. How many times have you pressed me in your arms at your return from hard labour, which you had prolonged in order to support me. And you, my dear mother, can you forget the many tender caresses that you have lavished on me,

at the very time when I was eating the bread of your children? You alone received me when abandoned by all the world; and shall I now abandon you? I was your son to inherit your fortune, and shall I not be so to share your poverty? Alas, how much you must have despised me before you could believe me capable of this!

*(Martha attempts to speak, but her voice is stifled by her sighs.)*

*Tho.* Despise you, Valentine! No, my son, I esteem you the more for these sentiments: but, I say again, it is time that you should think of doing something for yourself.

*Valen.* No. I think only of you: I will burden myself with your labours; I will afflict myself with your griefs: my head, my hands, all that I have, all that I am, I give you. I devote myself entirely to you: whether you go, or remain, I will never quit you: you may fly me, but you shall not hinder my following you. When you hear me groaning the whole night, stretched at the door of your cottage, you will surely open it to me.

*Tho.* Perhaps I may no longer have one.

*Valen.* Then I will follow you to the wild  
common

common or the bleak dreary mountain :  
wherever you go I will be with you.

*Mar.* (to *Thorowgood*—*exclaiming with sobs.*) You hear him, *Thorowgood*?

*Valen.* (*springing eagerly towards her.*) Ah, I knew it well, my dear mother ; I knew that you would not drive me from your heart.

*Tho.* (*melting into tears.*) Come to my arms, my son, my dear son ! it is I now who entreat thee never more to quit us.

*Valen.* Never, never, my father ! without relations, without friends, on whom could my heart repose ? I have no one on earth but you to love. I feel that you are a thousand times more dear to me since you have lost your all. I have hitherto only given you the sweat of my brow, but my blood is ready to be shed for you. O my father ! since you no longer urge me to quit you, you must press me the more closely in your arms.

## SCENE V.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Humphries.*

*Hum.* (*comes in at the close of last scene—advances hastily to Thorowgood.*) And I, *Thorowgood*, wilt thou repulse me?

*Tho.* (*looking upon him with indignation.*) What dost thou here, wretch ? Is it not

enough to have betrayed me? Must you also disturb, by your presence, the joy which this moment affords me?

*Hum.* Do not oppress me more; I suffer already too cruelly by a bitter repentance: you may either bring me back to the paths of honour, or expose me as the most unworthy of men, to the eyes of others as well as my own.

*Tho.* What then would you have with me?

*Hum.* Give me back your friendship. Think not, Thorowgood, that I was so base as to renounce it for a paltry gain: but you know what losses I have suffered. The fear of seeing my children want had blinded me; but it was using them very ill: I already feel that I shall love them less, after having been guilty of so black an action. Deliver me from my shame; give me back my own esteem, though at the price of my blood; give me back my friend!

*Tho.* Ah, Humphries, how difficult is it to cure the wound which thou hast made! Nevertheless, I am touched with your speedy return to virtue, and forget your offence.

*Hum.* Make me forget it then myself, and receive that which was the cause of it.

*Tho.* What do you propose? Shall I put a price on our reconciliation? No, Humphries,



phries, keep what belongs to you, if you wish my friendship.

*Hum.* I will not accept it if you refuse me: have you not advantages enough over me without this? You have no other way of being generous to me. Do not let me have before my eyes what will be a constant reproach to my heart.

*Tho.* If it be so, I accept your offer; but you must promise me that, on the first return of good fortune, I shall be at liberty to satisfy myself in my turn.

*Hum.* I have no will but yours: from henceforward let our losses and gains be in common between us.

*Tho.* You have recovered my good opinion. (*He takes his hand.*) Come, Martha, whatever misfortunes may happen to me in the course of this day, I shall always find cause for consolation, since I have preserved a son, and found a lost friend.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## A C T IV.

## SCENE I.

*Jenny.*

*Jenny, (runs across the room to the door of the next apartment.)* O Father! O Mother! Come, come quickly.

## SCENE II.

*Jenny, Martha, Thorowgood.*

*Mar. (first enters.)* Well, what is the matter, child? why do you make this outcry?

*Jenny.* There is a grand coach just now stopped at the door, with four beautiful horses, and a number of fine folks all bedizened with lace, both before and behind, and a gentleman in it. O mother, what a sweet countenance he has!—How do you do, my dear, he said to me, smiling—Where is your father and mother? —(*To Thorowgood.*) He wants to speak to you.

*Tho. (hastily.)* Odd so, I'll lay my life it is our landlord! I must run to receive him. (*He hurries out.*)

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*Martha, Jenny.*

*Jenny.* (*looking sorrowfully.*) What! this is the gentleman, then, to whom, as my father said, all that we have belongs.

*Mar.* Yes, my child, we owe him a great deal of money; and as we have not half enough to discharge our debt, we are willing to do as much as we can, and give him up all our remaining property.

*Jenny.* And what can he do with it? he has too fine a carriage to make use of our cart, and he is too well dressed to wear such clothes as we have.

*Mar.* That is very true; but he will sell them and take the money; we have no other way of paying, and even that will not be sufficient.

*Jenny.* Do you think that he will be so wicked as to treat us in such a cruel manner? if you had seen how good-natured he looked upon me—

*Mar.* There is no wickedness in all that, Jenny, it is no more than justice.

*Jenny.* It is a sad thing, however—let me take a last look at my holiday clothes. Could you

you have thought, mother, last spring, when you gave me this jacket and petticoat, that I should wear them only two or three times? It was but last Sunday that I felt such pleasure at being so smartly dressed! and you yourself, mother, were so happy to see it! (*She takes her mother's hand on perceiving her concern.*) Come, don't grieve, I do not mind my fine clothes; we worked to get them, and we will work to have others. But here is the gentleman coming; I will go look for my sister in the garden.

## SCENE IV.

(*Martha in the front—in the back part Mr. Parks, who is coming in with Thorowgood, whilst Jenny is going out.*)

(*When Jenny gets to the door, she meets Mr. Parks: she curtsies slightly, making way at the same time, and then proceeds.*)

Mr. Parks. Well, where are you going, my dear? are you afraid of me?

Jenny, (*half turned towards him.*) Oh no, Sir, no one can be afraid of you that looks in your face: excuse me a moment, I shall be back directly.

SCENE

## SCENE V.

(*Martha in the fore-part, Mr. Parks and Thorowgood behind.*)

*Mr. Parks, (to Thorowgood.)* What a sprightly countenance that little girl has?

*Tho.* Aye, and her sister too, I'll warrant her; they are both of them as lively girls as you would wish to see.

*Mr. Parks. (Seeing Martha approach, salutes her.)* Ah, Martha, how goes it?

*Mar.* As the times are, Sir, but very so so. I hope you are well, Sir.

*Mr. Parks.* Perfectly well, thank God, I have a thousand things to say from my wife; do you know that she had a great inclination to come with me!

*Tho.* And she would not have done amiss: our country air is much better than your close air in town. (*Seeing Mr. Parks hold his hat in his hand.*) But, Sir, I hope you use no ceremony here: pray be covered, You are at home in your tenant's house.

*Mr. Parks, (smiles and shews him his silk hat, only to be worn under the arm.)* You see it would not go on my head: it is the custom to appear with such hats as these in town upon some occasions.

*Tho.*



*Tho.* It is rightly said, what is the custom in town is not so in the country. (*Aside.*) But it is odd enough to use hats that will not go on one's head,

## SCENE VI.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, and two Servants.*

*First Serv.* (*who, with the other, is carrying in a large covered basket.*) Where would you have this laid, Sir?

*Mr. Parks.* There, in the corner; that will do: desire the coachman to take the horses to the best inn, and put up the carriage.

*Second Serv.* Have you any other orders to give the servants?

*Mr. Parks.* Tell them to order a good dinner for themselves; I mean to treat them to-day; but let them avoid drinking to excess. I shall not return to town before the evening: you must be ready at six.

*Second Serv.* Very well, Sir.

## SCENE VII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Mr. Parks.* You see, Thorowgood, we shall

shall have full time to talk together; but first, I should be glad to see all your family. Where are your children?

*Tho.* All at work; my sons in the field, and my daughters in the garden. But will you come and look at your corn fields?

*Mr. Parks.* Not now, in the evening, when the heat of the day is over.

*Tho.* They look finely: there is to the value of a hundred pounds, if there be a shilling.

*Mr. Parks.* Well, so much the better. (*He looks round the room.*) But what does all this mean? one would imagine that you were going to have an auction here. Why all this linen and furniture piled up in this manner?

*Tho.* It is because we expected your coming, Sir.

*Mr. Parks.* And what then?

*Tho.* I told you this morning that we should not be able to pay our rent; it is therefore our duty to give you up what we have, and you see it collected here. With the sale of our furniture, clothes, and corn, we mean to pay you as far as we can. Whatever may be deficient, we will endeavour to earn by our labour, till we have paid to a farthing. I hope, Sir, you will at present, be  
satisfied

satisfied with this on account, and have a little patience for the rest.

*Mar.* As you have always been so indulgent to us—and, indeed, it is not by any fault of ours that we are in this distress.

*Tho.* You know as well as myself, Sir, that I had drained the marshes in order to make them fit for pasture, and they were in a thriving way. All the money that we had remaining last year, we laid out in cattle, in order to fatten them for sale. Twenty head of good cattle was a little fortune, which promised fair to pay our rent, by sending a few of them off to market. A drought came on; there was scarcely a blade of grass in my fields: I fed my cattle with the straw of my bed, the thatch of my barn, and sometimes with the vegetables that were for my family's use. When I wanted to get rid of them, I could find no purchaser, owing to the scarcity of fodder. A murrain got amongst them, and I lost them all: I owe nothing, however, to any body but to you, Sir. Come and look at your grounds, you will see whether I have neglected to cultivate them; you will see if my own labour, with that of my wife and children, may not enable me one day to pay all my debts: I can, however, give you no other security  
than

than my own word ; but as I have always been punctual, till now, in my engagements with you, I should hope that you would have some reliance on my promise.

*Mr. Parks.* Yes, my friends, I do know you. Why should I not be content with the promise of such honest, worthy people as you are?

*Tho.* I give you thanks, Sir ; your kind words are still more pleasing than your goodness itself. How seldom will a creditor give the character of an honest man to the debtor by whom he has lost ?

*Mr. Parks.* How seldom also does it happen, my friend Thorowgood, that a creditor can with truth say, that the debtor, by whom he has suffered, is worthy of that appellation?

### SCENE VIII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*(Jenny, carrying with both hands a large cage with chickens, and Lucy with a basket of eggs in one hand, and holding up with her other the corners of her apron, in which are some handfuls of halfpence.)*

*(Jenny sets down the cage at the feet of Mr. Parks, and Lucy her basket also ; she then takes Thorowgood's hat, and pouring into it*

*the money that she has in her apron, presents it to Mr. Parks.)*

Lucy. Here, Sir, here is all that we have; our chickens, our eggs, and our money : we have nothing else in the world, have we, Jenny?

Jenny. No, indeed, Sir, nothing more.

Tho. (*looking at the hat over Mr. Parks's shoulder.*) What, so much money! how came you by it?

Lucy. With my sister's chickens, my eggs and flowers, which my mother sold for us in town.

Jenny. These were our first savings as a beginning towards our support ; but we part with all freely for your sake.

Lucy. That we do with all our hearts.

Tho. (*with joy.*) And I receive it with all my heart. No money ever gave me so much pleasure! Come, Sir, this is so much paid. (*To his children.*) How happy I am, my dear girls, to see that you have the same sentiments with your father.

Mar. What, then, is it from your own suggestions alone that you have done this?

Jenny. As my father himself is not able to pay, it is but right to help him all in our power.

Mr. Parks. Oh, Thorowgood, what exquisite



quisite happiness you must feel under your afflictions! The tenderness of your children is more than a compensation for all your losses. (*To Fenny and Lucy.*) No, my dear girls, I will not strip you of your first riches. Take back what you have so nobly offered me. I have no accounts to settle but with your father.

*Tho.* Give them their own way; they feel no concern in parting with these things.

*Mr. Parks.* And do you feel none at seeing them lose their little fortune?

*Tho.* How, Sir? There is nothing more natural and pleasing than to receive assistance from our children. Were I as rich as a king, all my possessions should be theirs; when I have nothing, whatever they possess is mine. (*To his children.*) Won't you be always glad to pay for us?

*Fenny, (pressing both his hands.)* Ah, father, can you doubt it?

*Lucy.* I wish we had a hundred times more, we would give it all with the same pleasure.

*Tho.* You hear what they say, Sir.

*Mr. Parks.* And I would not receive it, were it a thousand times more considerable. (*To Lucy.*) Here my dear good little girl, take back your treasure, pray do. (*He attempts to pour the money into Lucy's apron; she declines*

*declines it: at length, after many entreaties, she pretends to yield, and takes the hat, but places it on the table, beside the rest of the effects, and says to him, as she retires,) You will find it there with the other things.*

*Mr. Parks. (turning towards her.) What are you about? hold, hold.*

*Lucy. I will not even listen to you. Come, Jenny. (Both go off skipping and dancing.)*

### SCENE IX.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho. (pushing the cage and basket under the table.) I told you that they were shrewd lasses: they are not so easily caught.*

*Mr. Parks. But what, Thorowgood, do you really mean to make them pay for you?*

*Tho. Why not, Sir? it is very natural.*

*Mr. Parks. Methinks you are little acquainted with the manners of the town.*

*Tho. It is enough for me to know that I act right; whether in town or country no matter. Justice and duty are to me one and the same thing. Is not this the practice where you live?*

*Mr. Parks. It is precisely the reverse on most occasions.*

*Tho. Do you tell me so, Sir?*

*Mr.*

*Mrs. Parks.* Yes, my friend, you are surprized, yet it is too true. When by folly and extravagance, ambitious and destructive schemes, people have put it out of their power to pay their debts, they transfer to their children the property which they may have obtained from the credulity and confidence of their creditors; and when the latter apply for payment, the parents possess nothing, and all that they seemed to have, is found in the hands of their children, who will not part with it.

*Tho. (with indignation.)* What abominable knavery!

*Mar.* It is horrible.

*Tho.* And do the laws take no notice of these tricks?

*Mr. Parks.* Art and cunning find a way to silence them.

*Tho.* Your laws are as corrupt as those who stifle their voice, if they will not speak out on such occasions. Hear me, Sir; I am entirely ignorant of law proceedings; but I would not hesitate to say openly to that justice, which would submit to that restriction—Thou hast no farther business upon earth; be gone then to hell, where the wicked shall at last meet with due punishment. Were I the dupe of the father, I would go to the children,

children, and ask them, by what right they retained the property which ought to be restored to me? If they should tell me, that they received it from their parents, my answer would be, your parents could not bestow it on you; it belongs to me. I would compel them, without mercy, to sell the bed from under them in order to satisfy me.

*Mr. Parks.* Matters are not carried on in that manner with us.

*Tho.* I would have them carried on in my way: such fathers and such children are no better than a knot of thieves.

*Mr. Parks.* The fathers are the most criminal.

*Tho.* No, Sir, begging your pardon; the latter are still more so; the former are knaves, but the others are monsters. When a stranger hath relieved us in our distress, are we not in duty bound, whilst we have a drop of generous blood in our veins, to relieve him in turn, if he should want our assistance? and children, who owe every thing to their parents, have cost them so much anxiety, care and toil, shall they not act in the same manner? I shudder at the bare thought of such a thing; were I to see my father incapable of paying what he owed, though he had not left me a penny, I should  
still

Still think myself bound to fulfil all his engagements. I should consider it as a duty of inheritance in me to acquit his memory, and preserve the integrity of his name. Though I were to live upon bread alone, to the last hour of my life, and be obliged to work the flesh from my bones, I would endeavour to pay all his debts; and when I had done so, I would go to his grave, and address him thus: Father, now rest in peace, thou owest nothing.

*Mr. Parks.* Thou art a noble fellow, Thorowgood!

*Tho.* Yes, Sir, I would do so.—Gracious heaven! can we honor with the name of children those unnatural beings, who, rather than deprive themselves of some few comforts of life, would suffer their fathers to be treated like knaves? Without being one of their unfortunate creditors, I could curse such monsters of children.

#### SCENE X.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Lucy.*

*Lucy, (at the threshold of the door.)* Father, Humphries's cows are come; would you have them brought in?

*Tho.* Do you consider what you say? I'll



go and look at them: excuse me for a moment, Sir. This matter concerns you; they are likewise your property. I will tell you presently how I came by them, (*as he retires.*) Thanks be to Heaven, blessings are flowing in on all sides to-day! (*Goes out with Lucy, who would not venture in for fear Mr. Parks should press her to take back her money.*)

## SCENE XI.

*Mr. Parks, Martha.*

*Mr. Parks.* Your husband really astonishes me, Martha. I was very sensible, indeed, that he was full of honour and probity; but to find him possess such elevated sentiments in the very depth of distress, is what, I must own, I did not expect.

*Mar.* I have always seen him behave in the same manner, Sir, as you do now: in all transactions his first object is to find out the side of justice; and when he has found it, he adheres to it, and will support it with all, and against all, beginning by himself. However, he is no more than what he ought to be.

*Mr. Parks.* True; but then in the situation to which he is reduced, not to hesitate a moment!

*Mar.* Oh, Sir, you know but little of him;  
he

he would see us all without a morsel of bread, rather than have the least cause of reproach to himself; and that without appearing any way disturbed. He is never cast down; he is less the sport of Fortune than his fortune is of him.

*Mr. Parks.* You must love him dearly, Martha.

*Mar.* Love him! Ah, Sir, can you doubt it? What would have become of me but for the comfort that he affords me? I am always happy, when I see him with a cheerful countenance. I cannot imagine I have any wants as long as Heaven vouchsafes to preserve him to me. He is indeed my all upon earth.

## SCENE XII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* I give you joy, Sir; two of the finest cows in the whole country! Oh, let me alone, I will go to-morrow, yes, I will go myself to market. They will fetch ten pounds a piece the least penny: they sha'n't go for a farthing less, not to a prince. You may reckon upon so much; this will reduce our account so much. We will settle it, if you please. My debts hang like a mountain on my shoulders. I long to be eased of the heavy burden.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Parks.* I wish it as much as you can, my friend.

*Tho.* You know what I remain in your debt for the rest of my rent?

*Mr. Parks (looking stedfastly at him.)* Yes, but first of all, Thorowgood, are you really in earnest in this proposal, that I should take your furniture, clothes, corn, cows, and all that you possess?

*Tho.* Sir, I am always in earnest in matters of business.

*Mr. Parks.* Have you reflected seriously upon it? Do you consider that all your property is at stake?

*Tho.* My property! it is no longer mine, it is yours. Hear me, Sir; you know perfectly well, that I would not attempt to act a generous part by you at the expence of my family. I give you up nothing but what belongs to you. Rest assured that I would not offer it to you, if I thought I could retain it with a safe conscience. It would become me, truly, to make you presents! You would laugh at me. To cut the matter short, I cannot pay you the debt in ready money: I resign, therefore, all my possessions, without injury to your remaining claim, which I will pay, that I will, you may depend; you shall  
be

be next in consideration after the immediate necessities of life are supplied.

*Mr. Parks, (coolly.)* Very well ; but it would be dreadful to strip you entirely. Chuse out, amongst all these effects, what you value most. I flatter myself you will not refuse a trifling present of friendship from me.

*Tho.* When you talk so, it would ill become me to decline such a favor. (*He approaches the table, and takes a spade and rake.*) Here then. I will retain these instruments of my business ; with these, together with industry and resolution, we may always find means to relieve our distress.

*Mr. Parks.* What, do you take nothing more?

*Tho.* No, Sir, these are sufficient. If heaven will assist me, I shall not despair of supporting my wife and children with credit, and of laying up by degrees sufficient to pay you.

*Mr. Parks.* Very well ; now is your turn, Martha. I will have no jealousy : you must take something as well as your husband. Chuse what you will.

*Mar.* What must I too? You are too good, indeed, Sir.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Parks.* No compliments. Come, what do you chuse?

*Mar.* Well then, since you are willing to give me some of your property; (*she runs to the bottom of the room, and drawing a curtain*) I beg it as a favour, Sir, that you will let me take the cradle of the infant that I have at the breast.

*Mr. Parks, (surprized.)* What, was it included in the things that you were giving up? Would you have deprived your infant of a cradle?

*Mar. (coming forward.)* Would he not always have found one in my arms?

*Mr. Parks.* And could you once think that would have accepted it?

*Tho.* I have already told you, Sir, that children should pay for their parents. When the one suffers, what pretence can the others have to refuse sharing in the affliction? There is nothing that I am not ready to do for my children; but, at the same time, there is nothing that I do not expect from them in return. My blood is theirs, as their blood is mine.

*Mr. Parks.* What a man! how unshaken in his principles! (*aside.*) What you have taken, I give you: it is yours. Now you surrender the remainder to me, your household



hold goods, your clothes, corn, and the cattle that you have newly acquired? Do you transfer all right and property in them to me?

*Tho.* (*firmly.*) We do, Sir.

*Mar.* And without any regret.

*Tho.* Rather say, with the greatest pleasure.

*Mar.* (*drawing her purse out, and offering it to Mr. Parks.*) Receive likewise all the money that we have.

*Mr. Parks,* (*takes it, and throws it on the table.*)

*Tho.* Won't you reckon it? There are five and twenty pounds.

*Mr. Parks.* Your word is sufficient. So you make me absolute master of all: and you are satisfied that I shall dispose of it as I please, without any opposition from you?

*Tho.* As it is now your property, we have no more title or claim to it than to your lands. We should be strange sort of folks, indeed, to assume the liberty of controlling you, in any respect, as to the disposal of it.

*Mr. Parks.* Consider well the conditions that you are laying on yourself. It is not my intention to extort this agreement from you; but once the matter is so settled—

*Tho.* Oh! be not afraid that I shall attempt to recall my words. No, Sir, we are already

too sensible of your kindness in allowing us time: dispose of all things as you think proper. We shall only beg of Heaven that all may prosper in your hands.

*Mr. Parks.* Now we understand one another: then I acknowledge in turn that I have no farther claim upon you, being satisfied for all that you might be indebted to me, in consideration of your having surrendered up these effects.

*Tho.* (*with impatience.*) But no, Sir, you would lose considerably; this will not amount to one half of your debt. Such a parcel of trumpery and rags for a hundred and fifty pounds!

*Mr. Parks.* But it is my pleasure to take them at that rate. Am not I at liberty to do this as I think proper?

*Tho.* I have nothing to say as to that; yet I think it would be better to have them appraised, in order to know exactly what they are worth.

*Mr. Parks.* Peace, friend; they have a value in my eyes which no person on earth could possibly estimate. They are the fruits of the toil and frugality of an honest and worthy family. When I reflect how many drops of sweat they must have cost you, I think them of value enough to make me the amplest

plest satisfaction. Now, my good friends, you owe me nothing.

*Tho* (taking off his hat.) Good Sir, how shall I thank you? (then turning about, he throws his arms round Martha's neck, and fondly embraces her.) Heaven be praised, my dear, we are no longer in debt!

*Mar.* O matchless goodness! how shall we be ever able to shew our gratitude for so much generosity!

*Tho.* With our hearts, Martha; and there we have funds to discharge our obligations. (He advances towards Mr. Parks.) Will you now be so good as to tell me where we shall carry all these things, and when you will be pleased to have the keys delivered up.

*Mr. Parks.* I will tell you, provided you will forbear to interrupt me. (He takes both their hands, and addressing them with joy sparkling in his eyes,) My good friends, I am rich; and my parents taught me, from my infant years, to do good to the virtuous and worthy; but I never, till this day, so fully experienced the exquisite delight of benevolent actions. My worthy Thorowgood (squeezing his hand) thy behaviour hath filled me with esteem and admiration: all that thou hast made over to me to discharge thy debts, I restore to thee in turn, to acquit myself of a

duty which thy misfortunes and integrity claim from me.

*Mar. (looking up to Heaven.)* What then, shall I no longer be apprehensive of seeing my children in distress! O thou worthy, thou bounteous landlord! *(She kisses his hand with emotion.)*

*Tho. (confounded almost to stupefaction.)* I can scarcely believe what I have just now heard. No, Sir, it is impossible; and though these words may have escaped you in the enthusiastic emotions of your goodness, shall I be base enough to avail myself of them? No, no, I never will consent.

*Mr. Parks.* Softly, softly, Thorowgood, you just now admitted that I was absolute master of your property, and perfectly at liberty to dispose of it agreeable to my own fancy; and would you now deprive me of these rights?

*Tho. (throwing himself at his feet.)* Ah, Sir, you have seduced me into this; but why should I complain? Shall I receive bread from Heaven, and refuse it from you, whom it hath sent as a tutelary angel to relieve us in our distresses! Yes, I will become worthy of thy bounty, by receiving it as it is offered, with a soul full of joy and sensibility: but furnish me also with proper expressions to thank

thank you, (*shedding a flood of tears.*) I am afraid of not appearing sufficiently grateful for your favours.

*Mr. Parks, (raising him.)* Be comforted, Thorowgood; I see what is now passing at the bottom of your heart, perhaps, better than yourself, and am fully satisfied. Martha, call your children; I know with what tenderness they love you; I would fain let them see that I can love you also.

*Mar. (springing to the door.)* Jenny, Lucy! come, make haste, run as fast as your legs can carry you.

*Jenny, Lucy, (from without.)* Here, here we are, mother.

## SCENE XIII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Jenny,  
Lucy.*

*Mar.* Come, my dear children, look round about you; all that you see there, you know we had given up to this gentleman, our landlord; well then, you must know that he has given it up to us back again; he will neither take our money, our corn, nor our cows; he acquits us of our whole debt for nothing.



*Lucy, (goes and takes up the hat, and presents it to Mr. Parks.)* And will you not, then, take our money?

*Mr. Parks.* No, my dear children, the alacrity which you have shewn in assisting your parents, has taught me how worthy you all are to be relieved in your afflictions: take back, then, all that you have given for them, but make that use of it to which your tenderness first prompted you. For example, Lucy; as your father has lost his cattle, would you not be glad to employ what you have saved in buying others for him?

*Lucy, (with a dejected look.)* I am far short of having enough for that.

*Mr. Parks.* But, supposing that you had enough, would you be well pleased to make such a present?

*Lucy.* Ah, Sir! I should leap for joy.

*Mr. Parks.* I should be curious to see how you and Jenny would behave on such an occasion. Thorowgood, as you understand these matters better than your daughters, I commission you to go to-morrow to market for them, and buy for each of them six young heifers, the best that you can find. The money will be ready to pay them at my house: it is a little present which I make your children,

dren, that they may have the pleasure of making you one in turn.

*Martha.* Ah, dear Sir! when will you have done heaping favours? Come, my children, and join with me in thanking our generous benefactor. (*Martha, Jenny, and Lucy, throw themselves at Mr. Parks's feet, and kiss his hands, weeping for joy, whilst I horrow-good, motionless and silent, looks at him with profound astonishment.*)

*Mr. Parks,* (*turning aside to conceal his tears.*) Rise, Martha; rise, my good girls.

*Tho.* Sir, I knew you very well to be a man of humanity, and a worthy man, but I was not sufficiently acquainted with all your virtues; and I am really at a loss how to behave to you. (*To Martha.*) O my beloved wife! oh that we could but comprise in one word, one single word, all that our hearts now feel! (*Turning eagerly to Mr. Parks.*) Sir, I will offer my prayers day and night to Heaven, not for you, no; one of your actions is beyond a thousand of my prayers; but that there may appear now and then upon earth, a few men like you, to preserve wretchedness from despair. (*He takes Jenny and Lucy to the windows.*) Don't you see, my children, that hill yonder, from the top of which there is a view of the city where  
our

our benefactor resides: we go up it every Sunday in our way to church; well then, we never will ascend it without looking out for his place of abode, pouring out our blessing upon it, and praying to Heaven for him, his wife, and all that belongs to him, before we go to pray for ourselves. Will you remember this?

*Jenny.* O father, do you think that I can ever forget it?

*Lucy.* We will begin as soon as we leave home.

*Tho.* Yes, Sir, every day and every minute; in the fields, or in our cottage, where-soever we are, our first thoughts shall be devoted to you: we shall not be sensible of a moment of our existence, without reflecting that we enjoy it through your goodness, without being ready to lay it down for you at all times. You may, when you please, demand our blood, it is yours. Ah, why can I not at this moment pour every drop of mine into your veins, if it would but double the years of your life.

*Mr. Parks.* Be happy, Thorowgood, continue the blessing of your wife, and bring up your children to think as you do. I will visit you sometimes to enjoy this pleasing sight; and, I am sure, I shall be the better for it.

But

But now all our business is over, do you know that I expect a dinner from you?

*Tho. (joyfully taking him by the hand.)* Better and better still; this is a new treat.

*Mar. (with looks of perplexity and confusion.)* But, my dear, what can we offer the good gentleman?

*Tho. (in a free manner.)* Such as we have, Martha; I know him: a bit of dry bread will give him more satisfaction than if he had unexpectedly found a large joint of roast beef at our table.

*Mar. But still—*

*Mr. Parks. (with a smile.)* Make yourself easy, Martha, *(pointing to the baskets which the servants had brought.)* you will find in that enough to regale us; but let us go together, and take a walk in your garden; we all have occasion for a little fresh air to recruit our spirits. *(He goes out, leading Jenny and Lucy by the hand, while Thorowgood and Martha follow him, lifting up their eyes to heaven.)*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

## A C T V.

*(A room in Thorowgood's cottage : in the middle of which is seen a large table, very decently laid with a clean cloth, plates, knives, &c. On one side is the basket which Mr. Parks's servants brought ; Martha has just opened it.)*

## SCENE I.

*Martha, Lucy, Jenny.*

*Mar. (taking out of the basket a large piece of cold meat, and laying it on the table, whilst the children, standing round it, with pleasure in their looks, seem eagerly to examine every thing, licking their lips.)* What a noble piece of meat! Our landlord, I see, has not been sparing of his provisions.

*Lucy. (to Jenny.)* There, sister, look what a huge hump-backed pye! O, I dare say, it is very nice.

*Jenny, (to her mother, whilst she is carrying the pye to lay it on the table)* Mother, do you know what is in it?

*Mar.* No, my dear, the town-folks have many things that we know nothing of in the country.

*Lucy.* Oh, our landlord must be a very worthy



worthy good man, to give us back all our things, buy us cows, and bring us such nice victuals besides ! Jenny, we must hatch our eggs, and carry him the chickens

*Jenny.* Oh, I do so long to do it ; I wish they were plump and great chickens now : I could do any thing for him, I love him so.

*Lucy.* I will go and make him a nosegay of our finest flowers.

*Mar.* That is right ; and you, Jenny, you must help to set things to-rights in the house. Go and cut some slices of bread ; do it properly ; and when you have done, bring it in ; I want our landlord to see that you know something of the management of a house.

## SCENE II.

*Mar.* (*Shuts the basket, pushes it into a corner, and approaches the table.*) Let me see ; nothing, I think, is wanting ; the napkins and plates—now I must set the chairs. (*She places chairs round the table.*) Now every thing is ready, he may come as soon as he pleases.

## SCENE III.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho.* (*looking with astonishment at the table,*  
*and*

*and clapping his hands.*) How is this, Sir! what have you been doing? I believe that you imagined you had kings to entertain: what a noble piece of beef! and again, (*pointing to the pye*) what a glorious treat is here! it looks very tempting.

*Mr. Parks.* It is a pye which my wife has sent you.

*Mar.* Is it possible that Madam should think of us?

*Tho.* Oh, I readily believe it; she treated me in the kindest manner this morning: I would lay any wager that, next to my wife, she is the best woman in the world. Odso, Martha, let the month of January but come, and we shall have our turn. Look at this woman, Sir; I defy you to find her equal at managing a wheel. (*Clapping her on the shoulder.*) When winter comes, she shall, during the long evenings, spin for yourself and your lady, and make you a piece of cloth the finest you ever saw, I will warrant it.

*Mar.* What a pleasure shall I have! I will not lose a moment.

*Mr. Parks.* I am much obliged to you, my friends, but it is unnecessary; Martha has enough to do to mind her children; and it would be——

*Tho.* Hold, Sir, not a word more will I hear;

hear; we have suffered you long enough to have your own way; it is but just that we should have our will for once at least. Would you prevent us from being grateful? That would be depriving us of all the pleasure of our lives, and you are too good to desire that: come, let us sit down. (*He takes a chair and seats himself.*) There is your place, Sir; come, Martha, take yours also.

*Mr. Parks, (sitting down.)* Do not you wait for your children? they must sit down with us. I wish to have the pleasure of dining with the worthiest family that I know.

*Tho.* And we shall not be behind hand with you, Sir; we shall also be able to say, that we have had at our table the most compassionate and generous man upon earth, which is preferable to dining with kings, who have not such sentiments. (*To Martha.*) Is not Valentine yet returned from the fields?

*Mar.* No, my dear, nor George.

*Tho.* And the girls, what are they about?

*Mar.* You will find presently that they have not been trifling. See, here comes Jenny.

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SCENE

## SCENE IV.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Jenny.*

*(Jenny is carrying in a wooden dish, with slices of bread and butter on it.)*

*Tho.* Oh, oh, the bread, that is right; come hither, child; *(he takes two pieces of bread, lays one before Mr. Parks, the other before Martha.)* Though ours be household bread, it is, however, well tasted: you have what is lighter in town, but this is more strengthening for working people: luckily it is still quite fresh. But how is this Martha? you have forgotten something material. *(He smiles, while he presses her hand.)* It is not your fault, my dear; on such a day as this, our hearts are so taken up with joy and pleasure, that we cannot think of every thing.

*Mar.* *(running her eyes over the table.)* Something wanting, you say; what is it, pray?

*Tho.* Something to drink, wife; would you entertain Mr. Parks with a horse-feast? that would be strange, indeed.

*Mar.* What was I thinking of? I set it to cool.

*Tho.*

*Tho.* Run, make haste ; our cyder is somewhat rough, Sir ; it cuts the throat, but is sound.

*Mar.* What do you mean ? the gentleman has brought some wine.

*Mr. Parks.* Yes, my friend, and I must own that I think my liquor a little better than yours.

*Tho.* You have brought wine too ! How, Sir, had you not done enough without that ? This is too much ; what, bring us wine too !

*Mr. Parks.* Oh, it is not for you only ; I mean to drink a part myself. This day is to us all a day of pleasure ; and good wine is an excellent associate with joy and festivity.

*Tho.* Indeed, I had formerly some excellent wine always by me, which I kept for my father. When I happened to meet with good markets in town, my first business was to go and buy half a dozen bottles of the best that I could get, be the price what it would : I did not drink it myself, I gave it to wife to keep for those days when my father came to see us, and then I entertained him well. Do you remember, Martha, how happy the good old man used to be ? My children, he would say, this wine strengthens and cheers me ; but your affection, which makes you deny yourselves comforts for my sake,



strengthens and rejoices my heart still more : he was sometimes so much affected, that the tears flowed down his cheeks. You cannot conceive how exquisite the wine tasted to me, whilst I had my father drinking by my side. (*Jenny comes in with two bottles.*)

*Mr. Parks.* I hope you will not find this amiss neither.

*Tho.* Ah, Sir, your kindness is sufficient to make it delicious.

#### SCENE V.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Jenny, and Lucy.*

*Lucy.* (*carrying a huge nosegay of roses, honey-suckles, and jessamine, approaches Mr. Parks, curtsies to him, and says,*) Will you permit me, Sir, to fix this in your button hole?

*Mr. Parks.* I am much obliged to you, my dear Lucy, (*he kisses her,*) but it is as big as yourself. I would lay a wager that you have left none for your father and mother. Come, I must divide it; I shall receive nothing for myself alone to-day: there, Martha; there, Thorowgood; here is for you, Jenny; and Lucy, here is for you, (*sharing the flowers.*)

*Tho.* This is like a wedding-day, every one his nosegay.

*Jenny*

*Jenny.* One would take Mr. Parks for the bridegroom; he gives the dinner and the flowers.

*Tho.* Well said; my Jenny is in her gay mood.

*Mr. Parks.* This sprightly remark shall be worth a wedding gown to her on the day of her marriage.

*Tho.* So, Sir, we have nothing to do but to sit with our arms across, and leave you to do every thing; her wedding gown she must earn herself.

*Lucy.* But, father, suppose I should earn mine first?

*Tho.* Do you hear the little baggage! Upon my word, it becomes such a little girl as you to have such notions in your head: but come, come, let us think of nothing but dinner; let us be merry and gay.

*Mr. Parks.* Let us wait till your son's return. I will not dine until the whole flock be round me.

*Mar.* What a pity it is, Sir, that you have no children; you seem so fond of them.

*Mr. Parks.* Ah, Martha, you make my heart bleed a-new! Heaven had blessed me with a son, but——

*Mar.* An only son? and he is dead? what a terrible affliction!

*Mr. Parks.* I know not if he be dead, but he is so to me.

*Tho.* Perhaps he is in some foreign country, and you do not hear from him. (*Seeing Mr. Parks drop a tear, he presses his hand.*) Do not afflict yourself, my dear Sir, pray do not; if he be still alive, you will certainly see him again. What! shall you soften the sorrows of the wretched, and yet be wretched yourself? No, no, heaven is too just: you see how it treats me for only having done my duty; and you who rise so far above it, can it forsake you? Impossible. Come, come, be cheerful; let us not lose a moment of this glorious and joyful day.

*Mr. Parks, (wiping his eyes.)* Yes, my dear Thorowgood, I should reproach myself if I embittered thy joys.

*Tho.* You owe me this attention: it would be spoiling your own work. But why are my boys so slow in returning to-day? (*He rises from table, and looks out of the window.*) I will see whether they are coming. Oh, I see George. (*He beckons to him to make haste.*)

*Mar.* What George all alone; does not Valentine come? he should know that it is dinner time. I beg a thousand pardons, Sir, for making you wait.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Parks.* All in good time, Martha ; I am not impatient in such pleasing company ; an hour sooner or later will make no difference : the days are long, and provided I get home before it is dark, my wife will not be under any anxiety.

*Mar.* Here is George, however.

## SCENE VI.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Jenny,  
Lucy, George.*

*(George takes off his hat and bows, on seeing  
Mr. Parks.)*

*Tho. (running to take him by the hand.)*  
Come, my son, look upon that good man ; next to heaven and thy parents, it is to him that thou wilt owe the greatest obligations during life. Consider him attentively ; it is our worthy landlord, to whom we were to have given up all that we possessed upon earth, and who has now given it back to us.

*Mar.* And who likewise gives to your sisters a fine flock. Every day of your life, my son, you must bless him in your heart : we shall set you the example as long as we live ; and you shall continue that duty when we shall be no more. Will you not ?

not? Will you promise me to perform this faithfully?

*George.* How is it possible to neglect it, when the gentleman has been so good to us? but my father said yesterday that we should quit the farm. Are we now to continue in it?

*Tho.* Yes, for ever, my dear boy, for ever. I hope in God, to see my great grandchildren born in it.

*George.* (*running in transports to Martha.*) Oh, my dear mother, it is for your sake that I am most rejoiced: I may now tell it you; this whole night past I have done nothing but weep on your account.

*Mr. Parks.* And why so, my good boy?

*George,* (*taking Mr. Parks by the hand, and leading him to the window.*) Come, Sir, and I will tell you the reason: do you see, near yonder hedge, an old apple tree that has scarcely any leaves on it? My mother was saying, this spring, that she was very sorry that the frost had injured it so much, for she had never eat so good apples, as it bore, in her life, and that the tree was likely to die; the next morning, before she was up, my brother and I went to pick out the most flourishing buds we could see, in order to engraft them on other trees in the orchard,



chard, that in case the old tree should perish, my mother might still have some good apples; had we left the farm, it would have been a sad thing; somebody else would have come into it, and in time have eaten of the fruit which we had engrafted.

*Mr. Parks.* Nothing could be easier than for you to have taken them with you, and then nobody would have benefited by your labour.

*George.* Why should I do so? that would have been no advantage; and though it were, I know very well that we ought not to seek an advantage to ourselves, that would be a prejudice to our fellow-creatures: on the contrary, I should have wished them to gather good fruit from our trees.

*Mr. Parks.* But did you not just now say, that it would be a sad thing if others should eat the fruit which you had engrafted?

*George.* Undoubtedly it would be a sad thing to me, that my mother should be deprived of it; for though I wish good apples to others, I had much rather my mother should have them.

*Mr. Parks.* (*taking him by the hand.*) Thou art a good boy. (*Seeing Martha impatient to embrace him.*) My dear Thorowgood, I am every hour more and more and more enamoured

moured of your children: the only contest between you seems to be, who shall love the other best.

*Tho.* There is nothing like love and harmony in families. When my father and mother were living, all my study, night and day, was how I should please them best. I would have carried them on my shoulders in their old age: I am amply rewarded. I see, by experience, whatever we do for our parents is returned by our children.

*Martha, (to George.)* But where is Valentine? Why is he not with you?

*George.* He will not come to dinner.

*Tho.* But why so?

*Geo.* He has taken it into his head to finish his weeding before night; I pressed him to come home with me, promising to assist him as much as I could in the afternoon, but he would not listen to me. I have bread enough left, he said, shewing me the half of his breakfast; I shall dine upon this.

*Tho. (with some emotion.)* Excellent lad! because I have not been in the field to-day, he wants to do my work. He saw us bending under the pressure of misfortune, and he would fain support us by his frugality and industry. George, go back, pray, and tell him  
that

that we command him to return, and that we shall not eat any thing till he comes. (*turning to Mr. Parks.*) Ah, Sir, did you but know him, you would love him as much as we do.

*Jenny.* Father, shall I go along with my sister and George to fetch him?

*Lucy.* I will engage, we will soon make him come.

*Tho.* Go then, but do not loiter by the way.

## SCENE VII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Mr. Parks.* Thorowgood, you have no idea of the emotion that I feel this day; I see plainly that children are the choicest blessings of heaven.

*Tho.* Yes, when they are like ours; then, indeed, they are real blessings; and parents enjoy in them a treasure inestimable. O, Sir, you cannot imagine how much the calamities of life are lessened, when our children assist us in supporting them, (*clapping Mr. Parks on the shoulder.*) Only cheer up your heart, Sir, in whatever part of the world your son may be, I firmly believe that he will make your latter days the happiest of your life.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Parks.* Ah, were he but still alive, and of the happy disposition of your children! But why should I flatter myself with any such vain hopes? No, I have no longer any son to comfort me in the decline of life. Happy Thorowgood! you may grow old; you will enjoy the delight of seeing yourself revive in the five children to whom you have given birth.

*Tho.* Five children did you say, Sir? No; pardon me, only four. (*He reckons them on his fingers.*) The little one that is asleep behind the curtain, Lucy, George, and Jenny; these are all I have.

*Mr. Parks.* And the boy, who is in the fields.

*Tho.* He is not my son, though I love him as much as if he were so, and I have done for him all that I could have done for a child of my own, and the worthy lad is deserving of all my tenderness; he loves us as much as if we had given him birth, and he works for our support as if he were the eldest of my little family.

*Mr. Parks.* And where is his family?

*Tho.* That we are as much strangers to as you are; we saved his life when he was an infant in the cradle; my wife suckled him, and he has always lived with us. He must

not

not have been of common origin ; he had round his neck a coral, adorned with gold and jewels ; and the linen he had on was of the finest kind.

*Mr. Parks.* You preserved his life ! you are ignorant of his family ; and he is not of vulgar race ! Ah, dear Thorowgood, quickly tell me how he fell into your hands.

*Tho.* It is a melancholy story :—We then lived in the north of England ; I rented a farm there on the banks of a river ; it was an excellent situation, and the land yielded abundantly ;—no thanks to the care of the former tenant though—

*Mr. Parks.* Pass over these circumstances, pray, and only tell me all that relates to Valentine ; that alone inflames my curiosity.

*Tho.* Well, Sir, to come to the point at once ; you must know, that one night we were roused from our sleep by the water's rushing into our house on all sides : we had hardly time to get upon the roof to wait for relief there : in the morning a boat came to our assistance ; the whole country was under water ; the river was covered with the ruins of houses and furniture, carried away by the force of the current. I was endeavouring to comfort my wife, who lamented the loss of our cottage, but still more that of her son,

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who



who was stifled in the water before he awoke ; in the mean time, I suddenly perceived a cradle, tossed about in the flood, which was running rapidly, and threatening every moment to swallow it up. I could not bear the sight ; I threw off my clothes, and, regardless of danger, I plunged into the river, swimming with all my might towards the cradle. I was driven back several times, and almost exhausted with fatigue ; but the cries of the child, which I heard as I approached, inspired me with fresh spirits and vigour : in short, after much difficulty and danger, I got up to it, and brought it to the bank a good way lower down. My wife followed me creeping, more dead than alive, along the side of the river. I presented the infant to her, which continued crying until she gave it the breast. Poor Martha fancied that she had recovered her lost child. We then made all possible inquiries to see if we could discover the parents, but we never could get any information : our affliction at length ceased ; we continued to look upon him as our own son. I have related the whole story to the boy himself a hundred times : I concealed it indeed from my own children, to let them enjoy the pleasure of thinking him their brother, and to avoid all  
occasion

occasion of jealousy. I have had him instructed like the rest: he does his work as well as I can myself: he talks as if he were reading out of a book: and he can read and write as well as our schoolmaster.

*Mr. Parks.* And how long, pray, may it be since this happened?

*Tho.* About fifteen years and a few months, as well as I can remember. But hold, I can tell you to a minute, for I had a memorial drawn up the magistrate of the place, signed by the rector, and attested by the people, who were witnesses of the event. When I quitted the country, I took care to carry it with me. Go fetch it, Martha.

*Mar.* It is here in this little box, with the clothes and coral which Valentine then had: we have kept them carefully, and put them by this morning; because, if you, Sir, had sold our effects, it would not have been just, that what belonged to the boy, should have gone with them.

*Tho.* Fetch them quickly, my dear.

*Martha, (running to fetch the parcel, and giving it to Thorowgood.)* There, my dear.

*Tho. (opening it.)* See, Sir.

*Mr. Parks, (examines the coral, then the mark on the linen, and afterwards exclaims in transport,)*

*transport,)* It is he; it is he himself! O gracious God, hast thou then restored my boy!

*Tho. (in profound astonishment.)* What say you!—What, our Valentine your son? O my dear, my worthy Sir! I see your whole frame is agitated. (*He takes his hand and supports him.*) A chair, a chair, wife, quickly; he is ready to fall!

*Mar. (running to and fro.)* I know not what I am about; I am quite beside myself. How surprized will our dear boy be! (*At length she fetches a chair; Thorowgood makes Mr. Parks sit down, still holding his hand.*)

*Mr. Parks.* O day for ever blessed! to find my son, my long-lost son again! What will be the joy, the transports of my wife! It is now we shall begin to live! Oh, lead me, Thorowgood, lead me to him! For heaven's sake let me see my boy, and press him to a father's breast!

*Tho.* No, Sir, no, with your leave. Joy and surprize would kill my poor Valentine. He will be here presently. Step into this room until I have prepared him; he will be the better able to meet you, and you will be more composed.

*Martha, (looking out at the window.)* Here he comes, with his spade on his shoulder: look how fast he walks.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Parks. (running to the window.)* He comes, he comes! how my heart beats: let me fly to receive him.

*Tho. (stopping him.)* No, Sir, that would be of no service to either of you; and this time you must let me have my way. *(He puts Mr. Parks into the next room, who follows him reluctantly, his eyes still turned to the window.)*

## SCENE VIII.

*Martha, alone.*

This event will, perhaps, make me an object of pity. Valentine is now become a great man. Who knows if he will have any farther regard for us; or whether he will not blush to look on us? *(shedding some tears.)* Oh, if such a thing were to happen, I should never feel comfort more! I have brought him up with such care and tenderness! I love him so dearly; he was like one of my own children.

## SCENE IX.

*Thorowgood, Martha.*

*Tho. (to Mr. Parks, whom he leaves in the other room.)* Stay, stay here; I will let you

know when it is time that you should appear. (*Seeing Martha in tears.*) But why this, my dear woman ; why in tears ?

*Mar.* Ah, my dear, it is through joy and sorrow both that I weep.

*Tho.* How are you able to reconcile that ?

*Mar.* I am overjoyed that Valentine and his parents have, at length, found each other ; but he will be lost to us, and this afflicts me. Oh, if he should ever forget us !

*Tho.* What an abominable notion you have gotten in your head ! Forget us, wife ! no more than we can forget him. I see, plainly, you know but little of him yet.

## SCENE X.

*Thorowgood, Martha, Valentine, George,  
Jenny, Lucy.*

*Valen.* (*with eagerness.*) O my dear father and mother, what transports of joy I feel. (*He lays down his spade, and runs to embrace them.*) Jenny and Lucy have been telling me what the landlord has done for us. Where is the worthy gentleman ? let me kiss his hand, and thank him for all his goodness.

SCENE



## SCENE XI.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Valentine, George, Jenny, Lucy.*

*Mr. Parks. (rushing in, and running to clasp Valentine round the neck.)* Here, here, my son! Yes, you are my own son? My own flesh and blood! My love, my life, my all!

*Tho.* Do not be alarmed, Valentine; it is so, it is true; he is your father.

*Valen. (in deep amazement, surveys, with an astonished eye, Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, and Martha, by turns; he fain would speak, but his tongue refuses its office.)*

*Mar.* Yes, my dear boy, all has now been cleared up; this gentleman, for fifteen years, has bewailed your loss, and now we shall weep to lose you.

*Valen. (almost breathless.)* I your son! You my father; *(He breaks from those that are around him, throws himself at his father's knees, claps them, and imprints a thousand kisses on his hands. Mr. Parks clasps his son round the neck, and reclines his head upon him: they remain awhile in this posture, silent, and drowned in tears.)*

*Mr. Parks. (raising his head a little.)* All-gracious, almighty God! what returns shall I make thee for thy goodness?

*Valen.*

*Valen.* I have poured out supplications to heaven a thousand times, that I might learn to whom I was indebted for life ; and I have received it from you, who have now restored life, by your benignant goodness, to those who preserved mine. What powerful motives are these to increase filial piety, and to stimulate all my efforts, that I may merit your tenderness by the most zealous duty and affection !

*Mr. Parks.* My heart already tells me how worthy thou art of my love. Yes, my son, my dear, my only son, this heart has been always full of thee. But thy mother ! what transport will she not feel at sight of thee !

*Valen.* Ah, lead me to her, I entreat you. How I long to throw myself at her feet, and clasp her in my arms !

*Mr. Parks.* Come then, my son, I reproach myself for every moment that I delay her happiness. Let us run ; let us fly.

*Tho.* (*stopping them, and holding both by the hand.*) Consider what you are about ; will you break the good lady's heart by excess of joy ? No, no, it shall not be so ; first let us drink a glass of wine to strengthen our minds and bodies, otherwise we shall all be wrong ; I will then go and break the matter distantly

to

to Madam, and prepare her for the interview with her son. Ah, Valentine, how happy you will be to know her!

*Valen.* I shall see her then to-day, after having so long dreaded that I should never have that comfort! It is impossible to express the tenderness that I already feel for her.

*Mar.* And, Valentine, will you always love me?

*Valen.* Will I love you! I will always call you mother as well as her. If she brought me into life, did not you cherish it with the milk of your bosom, after my second father preserved it? What must have become of me but for you both? Your kindness to me hath been greater than I shall ever be able to repay.

*Mr. Parks.* Say not so, my child. Ah, though it were to cost me half of my fortune, I am resolved that these worthy people——

*Tho. (hastily interrupting him.)* I will not suffer you to say another word on this subject: your friendship, with that of my lady and Valentine, will be our best reward. I defy you, with all your riches, to give us any thing equal to that. But why do we longer delay sitting down to table? Come, sit Valentine here beside your father. Yes, I understand you; Martha shall be near you;

you ; the good creature loves you so tenderly ! (*Seeing Martha drying her eyes with her apron.*) Come, wife, don't be foolish : why those tears ? we are not lost to one another ; were he a worthless lad, then, indeed, he would be lost to us, and we should have reason to lament him.

*Valen. (looking tenderly at Mr. Parks.)* You see them, father : have I not reason to love them ? (*He lays hold of Martha's hand, who can no longer restrain her tears, and hides her face, whilst Valentine is caressing her with endearing fondness.*)

*Tho.* Well, shall we have an end of this ? the one is as great a fool as the other. Come, Martha, to divert you a little, seat the children, and bring us some glasses. (*Whilst Martha is engaged, he turns to Mr. Parks,*) I told you, Sir, just now, that virtue never failed of a reward ; here you see a proof of it. You had scarcely performed a good action before you were instantly recompensed for it. You gave us property that was no longer ours, and we have given you an only son, whom you had considered as lost. (*He gets up, and addressing himself to George, Jenny, and Lucy, who, during this whole scene remain silent, with their eyes continually fixed on Mr. Parks or Valentine.*) And you, my children, hence

hence learn never to despair of heaven or yourselves. When a flood, fifteen years ago, swept away my cottage, Providence gave me, at the same time, the means of requiting one day the man who was destined to be my benefactor. This day, when the effects of an unfavourable season seemed to threaten me with hopeless destruction, it has, on the contrary, re-established my little fortune. God makes use of every thing to reward those who do their duty. It is from two of the most dreadful scourges that we have derived our good fortune: let this be a lesson to you all your lives! When a man acts right, though misfortune should persecute him, though the lightning should flash round his head, and thunder shake every thing about him, so long as he has no reproach to make to himself, he remains firm as a rock, (*striking the table*) or if he falls for a moment, he rises up again with new vigour—a glass of wine, Sir. (*He takes up the bottle and fills round.*) It is, that we may all drink your health.

*Mar.* With the utmost pleasure.

*Tho.* Valentine, you alone can call him father with your lips; but we all say the same in our hearts as well as you—To your health, Sir.

*Valen.*



*Valen.* To your health, Sir.

*Mr. Parks (with tears in his eyes.)* I thank you, my dear boy; I thank you all, my children. How sweet is the name of father! (*He drinks.*) No wine ever tasted so exquisitely to me.

*Tho. (gaily.)* Nor to me, therefore I will replenish to you now, Valentine. Hear what I say: though you are now become a great person, I will never suffer you to be called by any other name in my cottage. By calling you so, we shall be more sensible that you still dwell in our hearts.

*Valen.* And wherever I go, if I shall meet you, I shall address you by the name of father.

*Tho. (presses his hand; all drink to the health of Valentine.)* But now I think of it, Sir, we related to you in what manner we found your son, it is now your turn to tell us how you lost him.

*Mr. Parks.* Most willingly, my friend, as the recital can no longer distress me: I had been married a year when a war broke out, and I received orders to proceed with my regiment to the West-Indies: my wife, notwithstanding all entreaties, would accompany me in that long and dangerous voyage, after giving birth to this dear boy, the only  
one

one that we have left. I had an uncle, a dignitary of the church, who lived near Durham; the infant was consigned to a nurse in his neighbourhood, that he might have an eye to him, and give us information about him. I received no account the three first years of my absence. Uneasy at so long a silence, I wrote to some friends in London: the most zealous of them visited the place, whence he acquainted me, that soon after my departure, a sudden inundation had ravaged the country, that my uncle had fallen a victim to his intrepid exertions on that calamitous occasion; that the house of the nurse had been swept away by the flood, and that my son perished with her; this dreadful news oppressed me with sorrow, and almost broke my wife's heart. At my return to England, I was restrained from making any researches, which appeared useless, lest my ill success should revive those bitter sorrows which time had somewhat alleviated.

*Tho.* What, for six years that I have been your tenant, and might have put an end to your grief! I shall never forgive myself for having suffered you to pine so long. I often told you of my happiness, why did you never mention your sorrows to me?

*Mr. Parks.* Could I have thought that

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you

you alone were capable of terminating them! And besides, I must confess, that I endeavoured all in my power to banish these sad reflections from my mind. I was particularly fearful of reviving them in the company of my wife. This very morning, when you wanted to talk about your children, don't you recollect how cautiously I endeavoured to turn the conversation to other subjects?

*Valen. (throwing himself into his father's arms.)* O my dear father, with what boundless affection I shall ever love you, to obliterate the remembrance of so many tears!

*Mr. Parks, (embracing him.)* Let us mention them no more, since their source is at an end.

*Tho.* Do not flatter yourself with that expectation, Sir; he will make you shed tears as long as you live, but they will be tears of joy only. You are far from knowing him yet sufficiently: when you have observed all his excellent qualities, he will become a thousand times dearer to you. How happy it makes me to see you so worthy of each other!

*Mr. Parks.* It is to your instructions, my worthy friends, that I am indebted for his merit; it was under you he learned to relish sentiments of honour and virtue. I have the  
comfort

comfort to find him exactly such as I would wish to have formed him myself. Ah, how shall I be able to reward you as I ought!

*Tho.* Reward us! Oh, that he has done a long time since; Valentine himself has taken care of that: night and day he has laboured all in his power for our benefit. Do you imagine that without his care and toil our fields would have prospered as they have done?

*Mr. Parks.* You will have a heavy loss, then, in losing his assistance?

*Mar.* Alas! it is the satisfaction of his society that we shall have most cause to regret.

*Valen.* No, father it is but right to tell you of what they, perhaps, would conceal, lest they might again interest your generosity of heart; all my efforts were due to them for their care and tenderness to me in my infant years, and I had no merit in working for them; but as industrious as they are, my hands were necessary to them: if they lose my assistance, it is my duty to make them a compensation—there is but one method: luckily it depends on the first favour I have to solicit at your hands, and you will not surely refuse me in this joyful and happy moment; will you, father?

*Mr. Parks.* No, my son; speak out; ask;  
K 2 there

there is nothing that you have not a right to obtain.

*Valen.* Well, then, I entreat you to give them those lands for me, since I am no longer to assist in cultivating them.

*Tho. (passionately.)* What say'st thou, Valentine?

*Mr. Parks.* What does he say? Ah, what fills my heart with rapture, as it proves to me that he is full of gratitude. Yes, my son; now am I certain of soon possessing thy affection, since I see thee so sensible of the tenderness that these worthy people had for you. Thorowgood, receive this farm from the hands of our son. I will not rob him of the joy that he feels in bestowing it upon you. I will only add for myself and my wife, the tenement that Humphries occupies, which is yours from this moment.

*Tho.* Forbear, Sir, pray forbear: spare us; do not quite overwhelm us. How shall we be ever capable of discharging our obligations? you will make us ungrateful, in spite of ourselves.

*Mr. Parks.* Do not then begin to be so, by robbing me of the joy with which I receive the present that you have made me. Is not a son a thousand times more valuable than the lands that I leave you? Speak, answer



swer me. Would you give your own for any such consideration?

*Tho.* You have always the art to confound and silence me, therefore I will leave you to act as you please: it would be criminal in us to combat your kindness. (*He turns to Martha.*) This morning we were unable, my dear, to pay half our debts, and now we overflow with riches. O my children, I may now die without being anxious about you; and whilst I lose you, Valentine, I see you provided with a father worthy of you! I am afraid my poor brains will be turned with excess of joy.

*Mr. Parks.* Come, Thorowgood, drink a glass of wine to settle them.

*Tho.* An excellent motion, and I will second it. (*After filling the glass round, he gets up, takes off his hat, and twirls it round his head,*) Come, wife, come, children. (*Seeing George, Lucy, and Jenny, afraid to take their glasses,*) Come, I say, this is a glass of gratitude; you must all drink it up. Yes, Martha, notwithstanding all your nods and winks, they must do it.

*Mur.* But, my dear, I am afraid—

*Tho.* (*interrupting her.*) So much the better, my dear; I wish them to feel it in their heads, that they may always remember this

great day. Let them drink deeply to the health of our benefactor. When they shall hereafter reflect on all that he has done for them, they will give him back, for every drop of wine, a thousand tears of gratitude and tenderness. Excuse them, good Sir, they are not yet of an age to comprehend the boundless extent of your favours; but let them grow up, as long as they live, you shall be blessed by them and their children.

*Valen.* Yes, I dare answer for them; I know their excellent hearts. O, my dear little sisters, and you my brother, I shall never forget your kindness to me! (*He embraces them.*) Father, you will permit me to husband my pocket-money, and save what I can to give them to settle in the world.

*Mr. Parks.* Gently, Sir; I pray don't offer to encroach on my privileges. I just now engaged for Jenny's wedding clothes.

*Valen.* Well, then, George and Lucy shall be my care. Don't you consent, my dear mother? (*Martha presses his hand, and answers only with tears.*) Father Thorowgood, won't you give your advice too?

*Tho.* How could I deny you what seems to give you so much pleasure? Yes, I agree to it for you as much as for myself. I stipulate, however, one condition, which I shall propose to Mr. Parks.

*Mr.*

*Mrs Parks.* Let us hear what it is.

*Tho.* You have often told me that you and my lady wished for a little retreat in these parts, to pass the summer in. The neighbouring land is to be sold; you may buy it, and build a lodge to your own mind; by these means we shall have you near us for half the year. I would lay my life that Valentine would grow melancholy, if he were always to be cooped up in the city.

*Mr. Parks.* What say you to this, my son?

*Valen.* I should be heartily glad of it, I must own; I like dearly the air of the country.

*Mr. Parks, (with a smile.)* Be it so then. You see, Thorowgood, I am more ready to comply with your desire than you were with mine.

*Tho.* Because there is some difference; but I have not done; the ground is extensive enough to allow good gardens. Look at me, Sir: you do not yet know all that I am capable of doing: I was formerly a gardener, and have not yet forgotten my old trade: I take upon myself to lay out the garden in such a manner, that people shall come far and near to view it as a curiosity.

*George.* I will undertake to dig the canals and trenches, to make the terrace, and plant the trees of your walk.

*Mar.*

*Mar.* And I and my girls will make the borders, and plant them with flowers.

*Fenny.* We will take the finest that we have in our own garden.

*Lucy, (skipping about.)* O, when shall we go to work?

*Mr. Parks.* What do you mean, my friends? I must then till your grounds, whilst you are at work in my garden.

*Tho.* I guessed that you would still be so unkind as to oppose me. Hear me, Sir; we shall be more expeditious in our work; and besides, the best time for working in your garden is precisely the season when there is scarcely any thing to be done in the fields. Though Valentine be now a person of consequence, still I hope that he will not refuse his assistance: his hands are used to the management of the spade; and to work for you will be the greatest pleasure to him. Only let us have our own way: every one will work cheerfully, and the whole will be finished before you have time to think about it. But here comes the worthy Humphries. What does he want? *(He gets up, runs and takes him by the hand.)*

SCENE

## SCENE XII.

*Mr. Parks, Thorowgood, Martha, Humphries,  
Valentine, George, Jenny, Lucy.*

*Hum.* I come to know, Thorowgood, whether you are pleased with your cows.

*Tho.* Ah, my dear neighbour, I am much more so that we can still be friends: your return completes my day's joy. Come and sit down with us. I will seat you in the company of the best man upon earth.

*Hum.* (*advancing.*) What do I see! our landlord here?

*Mr. Parks, (with a smile.)* No, Humphries, I am no longer any thing to you but plain Mr. Parks; there is your present landlord, (*pointing to Thorowgood.*)

*Hum.* What, is it so, Thorowgood?

*Tho.* Yes, my friend, it is even so: but rich as I am, we shall be no less familiar than we have been.

*Hum.* I am at a loss to comprehend this,

*Tho.* I believe you; it would puzzle many more. We rarely meet with a man so generous as our landlord; but the short of the matter is, that I am now, through his favour, the master of this farm and your tenement.

*Mr.*



*Mr. Parks.* It is true; I have just now given him the entire property in it.

*Hum.* Well, Thorowgood, I give you joy of your good fortune, with all my heart; and I am neither envious nor jealous of it. I hope you will be as good a landlord to me as Mr. Parks has been.

*Tho.* Ah, my friend, how happy am I that I now have it in my power to acknowledge your honesty to me this morning! Consider what you would have gained by following the advice of a bad man: for two paltry cows, which you might have retained, you would have lost a valuable friend: my little fortune would have made you mad with envy and rage. On seeing me the owner of your tenement, you would have been in continual dread of being turned out by me through revenge. That idea would have embittered your life; instead of that, you have now in me a friend, that will stand by you on all occasions. It will give me the greatest pleasure to serve you: I can begin this moment. I return you the two cows you sent me, and I hold you exempt from paying any rent for two years.

*(Hum. bries, struck with astonishment, cannot utter a word, and stares at him open mouthed.)*

*Mr. Parks.* I thought nothing could have increased

increased the pleasure I felt in conferring favours upon you; but the use you now make of them, enhances and sweetens my joy beyond any thing that ever I experienced before. (*He presses his hand.*)

*Tho.* Ah, Sir, it would ill become me to profit by your favours, and not benefit likewise by your example. It is you that have enabled me to oblige my neighbour; and I thank you for this additional pleasure.

*Hum.* (*recovering himself, and taking Thoroughgood by the hand.*) Ah, my friend, how shall I become worthy of your kindness! nothing pains me so much as that I have it not in my power to shew my gratitude.

*Tho.* What do you say, Humphries? God preserve me from doing service to others with the view of having it returned! To do good is a wonderful thing, that carries along with it its best reward.

*Hum.* Heaven will bless you in your wife, your children, and all your undertakings; and, for my part, I shall never think of you but with eyes overflowing with the tenderest tears. I already wish you happier than myself. I am only jealous of one thing; it is of the honour that Mr. Parks has done you in dining with you. Hear me: I have a fat lamb that I was going to sell, it shall now  
serve

serve to renew our friendship. Mr. Parks, you Martha, and your children, must all come and eat part of it to-morrow.

*Tho.* I like the motion very well. What do you say, Sir?

*Mr. Parks.* I deny nothing this day.

*Tho.* Nor I, truly. This has been a wonderful day, Humphries. My wife and I are obliged to go this moment to town; but to-morrow shall tell you wonders that will delight and surprize you; and that will shew you more clearly, that the virtue which remains unshaken in adversity always receives its reward.

VANITY

# VANITY PUNISHED.

A DRAMA, IN ONE ACT,

## CHARACTERS.

Mr. Waller.

Mrs. Waller.

Valentine, - - - *their Son.*

Mr. Ray,

Mr. Nash,

Michael,

Martin,

- - - *a Country Boy.*

- - - *the Gardener.*

} *Friends to Mr. Waller.*

## SCENE I. *A Garden.*

*Mr. Waller, Mrs. Waller.*

*Mr. Waller.*

**Y**ONDER is our Valentine walking in the garden with a book in his hand. I am very much afraid that it is rather through vanity than from a real desire of improving himself, that he always appears to be busy reading.

*Mrs. W.* What makes you think so, my dear?

L

*Mr.*

*Mr. W.* Do not you remark that he casts a side-look now and then, to see if any body takes notice of him?

*Mrs. W.* And yet his masters give a very flattering account of his diligence, and all agree that he is very far advanced for his age.

*Mr. W.* That is true. But if my suspicions are right, and if the little that he can know has made him vain, I would rather a hundred times that he knew nothing, and were modest.

*Mrs. W.* That he knew nothing?

*Mr. W.* Yes, my dear. A man without any great extent of knowledge, but upright, modest and industrious, is a much more estimable member of society than a learned man whose studies have turned his head and puffed up his heart.

*Mrs. W.* I cannot think that my son is of that description.

*Mr. W.* Heaven forbid! But while we are here in the country I shall have more opportunities of observing him; and I am resolved to take the advantage of the first that shall offer, to clear up my doubts. I see him coming towards us. Leave me alone with him a moment.

SCENE



## SCENE II.

*Mr. Waller, Valentine.*

*Val. (to Michael, whom he pushes back.)*  
No; leave me. Papa, it is that little fool of a country boy that comes always to interrupt me in my reading.

*Mr. W.* Why do you call that good-natured child a little fool?

*Val.* Why, he knows nothing.

*Mr. W.* Of what you have learnt, I grant you; but then he knows many things which you do not, and you may both inform each other a good deal, if you will communicate what you know, one to the other.

*Val.* He may learn a good deal of me, but what can I learn from him?

*Mr. W.* If ever you should have a farm, do you think that it would be of no service to you to have an early notion of the labours of the country, to learn to distinguish trees and plants, to know the times of sowing and harvest, and to study the wonders of vegetation? Michael possesses these different parts of knowledge, and desires no better than to share them with you. They will perhaps be one day of the greatest use to you. Those, on the contrary, that you could communi-

cate, would be of no service to him. So that you see, in this intercourse, all the advantage is on your side.

*Val.* Well, but papa, would it become me to learn any thing from a little country boy?

*Mr. W.* Why not, if he is capable of instructing you? I know no real distinction amongst men, but that of useful talents and good manners; and you must own that in both these points, he has equally the advantage over you.

*Val.* What, in good manners too?

*Mr. W.* In every station, they consist in treating all persons as our duty prescribes to us. He does so, in shewing a particular attachment and complaisance to you. Do you do the same? do you make a return of mildness and good will? And yet he seems to merit them. He is active and intelligent. I believe him to be possess of good-nature, spirit, and good sense. You ought to think yourself very happy in having so amiable a companion, with whom you may at once amuse and improve yourself. His father is my foster-brother, and has always had a remarkable affection for me. I am pretty sure that Michael has the same for you. See how the poor little fellow hangs about the terrace-walk to meet you. Take care and use him

him with civility. There is more honour and integrity in his father's cottage than in many palaces. His family too has been our tenants for some generations, and I should be glad to see he connexion continued between our children. (*He goes out.*)

## SCENE III.

*Valentine, (alone.)*

Yes, a fine connexion indeed! I think papa is joking. This little country boy teach me any thing! No; I will surprize him now so much with my learning, that he will not think of talking to me of his own, I'll warrant him.

## SCENE IV.

*Valentine, Michael.*

*Mich.* You won't have my little nosegay, then, Master Valentine?

*Val.* Nosegay? Psha! neither ranunculus nor tulip.

*Mich.* Why, it is true, they are only field flowers, but they are pretty, and I thought you might like to know them by their names.

*Val.* A great matter, indeed, to know the names

names of your herbs. You may carry them where you found them.

*Mich.* Well now, if I had known that, I would not have taken the trouble to gather them. I was resolved not to go home yesterday evening without bringing you something, and as I came back from work, tho' it was rather late, and I had a great mind for my supper, I stopped in our close, to gather them by the light of the moon.

*Val.* You talk of the moon! Do you know how big it is?

*Mich.* Heh! Fegs! as big as a cheese.

*Val.* Ignorant little clown! (*Struts with an air of importance, while Michael stands staring at him.*) Look here (*showing him his book.*) This is Telemague. Have you ever read it?

*Mich.* This is not the catechism: our schoolmaster never talked to me about that.

*Val.* No, it is none of your country books.

*Mich.* Nay, how should I have read it then? But let us see it.

*Val.* Do not think of touching it with your dirty hands! (*holding one of them up.*) Where did you buy these tanned leather gloves?

*Mich.* Anan! 'it is my hand, Master Valentine.

*Val.*

*Val.* The skin is so hard, that one might cut it into shoe soles.

*Mich.* It is not with idleness that they are grown so hard. You know how to talk very well, I dare say, and yet I would not change conditions with you. To work honestly, and offend nobody, is all that I know, and it would be no harm if you knew as much. Good bye, Sir.

## SCENE V.

*Valentine, (alone.)*

I think the little clown had a mind to make game of me. But I see company coming on the terrace-walk. I must put on a studious air before them. *(He sits down, seeming to read in his book with great attention.)*

## SCENE VI.

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Mr. Ray, and Mr. Nash.*

*Valentine, (seated on a bench on one side.)*

*Mr. Wal.* What a fine evening! Would you chuse, gentlemen, to take a walk up this slope, to see the sun setting?

*Mr. Ray.* I was going to mention it. The weather



weather is delicious, and the sky perfectly without a cloud in the west.

*Mr. Nash.* I shall be sorry to go from the nightingale. Do you hear his charming melody, madam?

*Mrs. Wal.* I was taken up with thinking. My heart was filled with pleasure.

*Mr. Ray.* How can one live in town during this charming weather?

*Mr. Wal.* Valentine, will you walk up the slope with us, to see the sun setting?

*Val.* No, I thank you, papa. I am reading something here that gives me more pleasure.

*Mr. Wal.* If you speak truth, I pity you, and if you do not—Come, gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. Let us continue our walk. (*They walk forward up the hill.*)

## SCENE VII.

*Valentine, (seeing them at a good distance.)*

There, they are almost out of sight: I need not be under any constraint now. (*Puts the book into his pocket.*) What an opinion will these gentlemen have of my diligence! I should like to be a bird and fly after them, to hear the praises that they are giving me. (*Saunters about, yawning and listless, for near a quarter*

*a quarter of an hour.*) I am tired, after all, of being here alone. I can do better! The sun is set now, and I hear the company returning. I will slip into the wood, and hide myself in it so, that they shall scarcely find me. Mama will send all the servants to look for me with lights. They will talk of nothing but me all the evening, and will compare me with those great philosophers that have been known to go astray in their learned meditations, and to lose themselves in woods. My adventure will make a fine noise! Now for it. (*He goes into the wood.*)

## SCENE VIII.

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Mr. Ray, Mr. Nash.*

*Mr. Ray.* I never saw weather more pleasing, nor a more charming scene.

*Mr. Wal.* Gentlemen, my pleasure has been doubled by my enjoying it in your company.

*Mr. Nash.* The nightingale too still continues his song. His voice seems even to grow more tender as night comes on. I am sorry that Mrs. Waller does not seem to listen to it with as much pleasure as before.

*Mrs. W.* It is because I am anxious about my son. I do not see him the garden. (*She calls*

*calls him.*) Valentine! He does not answer!  
(*Perceiving the gardener, she calls him*) Martin, have you seen my son?

*Martin.* Yes, madam, about ten minutes ago I saw him turn towards the grove.

*Mrs. W.* Towards the grove? Bless me; if he should lose himself! Pray run after him, and bring him in.

*Martin.* Yes, madam. (*Goes out.*)

*Mrs. W.* Mr. Waller, won't you go along with him?

*Mr. W.* No, my dear, I am not uneasy, for my part, Martin will be able to find him.

*Mrs. W.* But if he should take a different way? I am frightened out of my wits!

*Mr. Nash.* Make yourself easy, madam. Mr. Ray and I will take the two sides of the wood, while the gardener shall take the middle. We cannot fail of finding him so.

*Mrs. W.* Ah! gentlemen, I did not dare to ask it of you; but you know the feelings of a mother.

*Mr. W.* Gentlemen, do not give yourselves so much trouble, I'd rather you would not.

*Mr. Ray.* You will not take it amiss that we comply with Mrs. Waller's request rather than your's.

*Mr.*

*Mr. W.* I must confess it is against my inclination.

*Mr. Nash.* We will receive your reproaches at our return. (*They walk towards the grove.*)

SCENE IX.

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller.*

*Mrs. W.* Why, my dear, whence comes this indifference about your son?

*Mr. W.* Do you think, my dear, that I love him less than you do? No, but I know better how to love him.

*Mrs. W.* And what if he could not be found?

*Mr. W.* I should be very glad of it.

*Mrs. W.* What, that he should pass the night in a gloomy wood? What would become of the poor child? and what would become of me?

*Mr. W.* You would both be cured. He of his vanity, and you of your injudicious fondness which keeps it up in him.

*Mrs. W.* What do you mean, my dear?

*Mr. W.* I am just now convinced of what I only suspected in the morning. The boy's head is filled with excessive vanity, and all his reading is but ostentation. He has only  
lost

lost himself on purpose to make us look for him, and to appear absent and forgetful through intense study. It gives me more pain that his mind should wander from a right way of thinking than if his steps really went astray. He will be unhappy all his life if he is not cured of it in time, and there is nothing but a wholesome humiliation that can save him.

*Mrs. W.* But do you consider—

*Mr. W.* Yes, every thing. He is eleven years old. If he can profit any thing by his natural sense or his learning, the light of the moon and the direction of the wind may guide him sufficiently to clear the wood.

*Mrs. W.* But if he has not that thought?

*Mr. W.* He will then better see the necessity of profiting by the lessons that I have given him upon this subject. Besides, we intend him for the army, and in that profession he will have many nights to pass without shelter. He will know what it is, and not go to a camp quite raw, to be laughed at by his companions. Then the air is not very cold at this season of the year, and for one night he will not die with hunger. Since by his folly he has brought himself into a scrape, let him get out of it again, or suffer the disagreeable consequences of it.

*Mrs. W.* No ; I cannot agree to it ; and

if



if you don't send people after him, I will go myself.

*Mr. W.* Well, my dear, I will make you easy, though I am sorry that you will not let me follow my plan, as I intended. I shall tell little Michael to join him as it were by chance. Colin too shall be at a small distance, in order to run to them in case of an accident. For any thing more, do not ask it; I have taken my resolution, and do not chuse, by a blind weakness, to deprive my son of a lesson that may be of service to him. Here are our friends coming back with Martin.

*Mrs. W.* O heavens! I see, and they have not found him.

*Mr. W.* I am glad of it.

# SCENE X.

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Mr. Ray, and Mr. Nash.*

*Mr. Nash.* Our search has been in vain; but if Mr. Waller will let us have some lights and servants—

*Mr. W.* No, gentlemen; you have complied with my wife's request, you will now listen to mine. I am a father, and know my duty as one. Let us go into the parlour, and I will give you an account of my design.

M

SCENE

## SCENE XI.

*The Middle of the Wood.*

*Valentine.*

What have I done, fool that I was? It is dark night, and I don't know which way to turn. (*Calls.*) Papa! papa! Nobody answers. I am undone; what will become of me? (*cries.*) O mama! where are you? Answer your son this once. Heavens! what is that running through the wood? If it should be a robber! Help! help!

## SCENE XII.

*Valentine, Michael.*

*Michael.* Who is there? Who is it that cries so? What, is it you, Sir? How do you happen to be here at this time of night?

*Valentine.* O! dear Michael, my dear friend, I have lost my way.

*Mich.* (*looking at him first with an air of surprize, and then bursting out in a laugh.*) You don't say so? I your dear Michael? your dear friend? You mistake; I am only a dirty little country boy. Don't you remember? Nay, let go my hand. The skin is only fit to cut up for shoe soles.

*Val.*

*Val.* My dear friend, excuse my impertinenc, and for pity's sake guide me back to our house. My mama will pay you well.

*Mich.* (*looking at him from top to bottom.*) Have you finished reading your Tellymack?

*Val.* (*looking down quite confused.*) Ah! pray now—

*Mich.* (*putting his finger to the side of his nos., and looking up.*) Tell me, my little wise man, how big may the moon be just now?

*Val.* Nay, spare me, I beg of you, and guide me out of this wood.

*Mich.* You see then, master, that one may be a dirty little country boy, and yet be good for something. What would you give to know your way, instead of knowing how big the moon is?

*Val.* I own my fault, and I promise never to shew any pride for the future.

*Mich.* Well, that is clever. But this same repenting by necessity may only hang by a thread. It is not amiss that a young gentleman should see what it is to look upon a poor man's son like a dog, and play with him according to his fancy. But to shew you that an honest clown does not bear malice, I will pass the night with you, as I have passed many a one with our sheep on the downs. To-morrow morning early I will take you

home to your papa. Here, then, I'll share my bed-chamber with you.

*Val.* O, my good Michael!

*Mich.* (*stretching himself under a tree.*)  
Come, Sir, settle yourself at your ease.

*Val.* But where is this bed-chamber of your's?

*Mich.* Why, here. (*Striking on the ground.*)  
Here is my bed; take your place. It is wide enough for us both.

*Val.* What, must we lie here under the open air?

*Mich.* I assure you, Sir, the king himself has not a better bed. See what a fine ceiling you have over your head; how many bright diamonds adorn it! and then our handsome silver lamp. (*Pointing to the moon.*)  
Well, what do you think of it?

*Val.* Oh! my dear Michael, I am ready to die with hunger.

*Mich.* I dare say I can help you there too. See, here are some potatoes. Dress them, as you know how.

*Val.* Why they are raw.

*Mich.* It is only to boil or roast them. Make a fire.

*Val.* We want a light to kindle one; and then where shall we find coal or wood?

*Mich.* (*smiling.*) Why, cannot you find all that in your books?

*Val.*

*Val.* Oh! no, my dear Michael.

*Mich.* Well, then, I'll shew you that I know more than you and all your Telly-macks. (*Takes a tinder-box, with flint and steel out of his pocket.*) Crack! there is fire already; now you shall see. (*He gathers a handful of dry leaves, and putting them round the tinder, fans with his hand until they take fire.*) We shall soon have a blazing hearth. (*He puts bits of dry wood upon the lighted leaves.*) Do you see? (*lays the potatoes close to the fire, and sprinkles them with dust.*) This must serve, instead of ashes, to hinder them from burning. (*Having laid them properly, and covered them once more with dust, he turns the fire over them, then adds fresh wood, and blows it up with his breath.*) Have you a finer fire in your papa's kitchen? Come, now they will soon be done.

*Val.* O my good friend, what return can I make to your kindness?

*Mich.* Return? Pooh! when one does good, it pays itself. But stop a moment. While the potatoes are roasting I will fetch some hay for you. I saw a good deal lying in one part of the wood. You will sleep upon that like a prince. But take care of the roast while I am away. (*Goes out singing.*)



## SCENE XIII.

*Valentine.*

Fool that I was! how could I be so unjust as to despise this child. What am I, compared to him? how little I am in my own eyes, when I examine his behaviour and mine! but it shall never happen again. Henceforward I will not despise those of a lower condition than myself. I will not be so proud, nor so vain. (*He walks about, and gathers up dry sticks for the fire.*)

## SCENE XIV.

*Valentine, Michael, (hauling in a large bundle of hay.)*

*Mich.* Here is your bed of down, your coverlid and all. I will make you a bed now quite soft.

*Val.* I thank you, my friend. I would help you, but I do not know how to set about it.

*Mich.* I don't want you. I can do it all alone. Go warm yourself. (*He unties the bundle, spreads part of it on the ground, and reserves the rest for a covering.*) That is finished. Now let us think of supper. (*Takes a potatoe from the fire, and tastes it.*) They are done.

done. Eat them while they are warm, they are better so.

*Val.* What, won't you eat some with me?

*Mich.* No, thank you. There is just enough for you.

*Val.* How? Do you think?—

*Mich.* You are too kind. I won't touch them. I am not hungry. Besides, I shall have as much pleasure in seeing you eat them. Are they good?

*Val.* Excellent, my dear Michael.

*Mich.* I dare say you never tasted sweeter at your papa's table.

*Val.* That is very true.

*Mich.* Are you done? Come then, your bed is ready for you. *Valentine lies down. Michael spreads the rest of the hay over him, then takes off his jacket.* The nights are cold: here, cover yourself with this too. If you find yourself chilly, come to the fire; I'll take care that it does not go out. Good night.

*Val.* Dear Michael, I shall never be easy until I make you amends for my treating you ill.

*Mich.* Think no more of it; I do not. The lark will awake us to-morrow morning at break of day. *(Valentine falls asleep, and Michael sits up close by him to keep the fire up.*

*At*

*At break of day Michael awakes him.)* Come, master, you have slept enough. The lark has opened her song already, and the sun will soon appear behind the hill. Let us set out, and go to your papa's.

*Val. (rubbing his eyes.)* What already? so soon? Good morning, my dear Michael!

*Mich.* Good morning, Master Valentine! How did you sleep?

*Val. rising)* As sound as a rock. Here is your jacket. I thank you a thousand, thousand times. I shall never forget you as long as I live.

*Mich.* Do not talk of thanks. I am as happy as you. Come, walk along with me. I'll guide you. *(They go off.)*

## SCENE XV.

*A Room in Mr. Waller's House.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller.*

*Mrs. W.* In what terrors have I passed this whole night! I fear, my dear, that some accident has happened to him. We must send our people to look for him.

*Mr. W.* Make yourself easy, my love; I will go myself. But who knocks? *(The door opens.)* Look, here he is.

SCENE

## SCENE XVI.

*Mr. and Mrs. Waller, Valentine, Michael.*

*Mrs. W. (running to her son.)* Ah! do I see thee again, my dear child?

*Mich.* Yes, madam, there he is, if egs! a little better mayhap than before you lost him.

*Mr. W.* Is that the case?

*Val.* Yes, papa. I have been well punished for my pride. What will you give him that has reformed me?

*Mr. W.* A good reward, and with the greatest chearfulness.

*Val. (presenting Michael to him.)* Well, this is he to whom you owe it. I owe him my friendship too, and he shall always share it.

*Mr. W.* If that is so, I'll make him a little present every year of a couple of guineas, for curing you of so intolerable a fault.

*Mrs. W.* And I will make him one of the same sum, for having preserved my son to me.

*Mich.* If you pay me for the satisfaction that you feel, I should pay you too for what I felt. So we are clear.

*Mr. W.* No, my little man, we shall not run from our words. But let us go to breakfast

fast all four. Valentine shall relate his adventures of the night.

*Val.* Yes, papa ; and I shall not spare myself, though I should be turned into ridicule for them. I blush for my folly, but hope that I shall never have to blush for the same behaviour again.

*Mr W.* My dear son, how happy you will make your mother and me by proving that your reformation is sincere, and will never suffer a relapse.

*(Valentine takes Michael by the hand ; Mr. Waller gives his to his Lady, and they all go into the next apartment.)*



# BLIND - MAN'S BUFF.

A DRAMA, IN TWO ACTS.

## CHARACTERS.

Mr. Jephson.

Frank, *his Son.*

Lucy, } *his Daughters.*  
Isabella, }

Dorinda, } *their Friends.*  
Alice, }

Laura, *a little lame,*

Elder Danby, } *Friends to*  
Younger Danby, *who stutters,* } *Frank.*

Roberts, *their acquaintance.*

Mr. Jephson's Groom.

SCENE *an Apartment in the House of Mr. Jephson, with a Table, and upon it Books and other Papers, and a speaking Trumpet in the Corner,*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

Frank, (*speaking to his Father as he goes down stairs.*)

NO, no, papa, do not be afraid: I will take the greatest care that no accident shall happen to your papers, I will put up

up your books too in the closet.—(*He comes forward, jumping for joy.*) We shall have some fine diversion! When the cat is away, the mice (it is said) will play. (*To Lucy, who now comes in.*) Well now, Lucy, is mama gone out, and all our little friends arrived?

*Lucy.* My friends are all three come; but none of your companions yet.

*Frank.* O, I can easily believe you, sister. We do not want to run a gadding like you girls; and so we are not the first to keep appointments of this nature. You must force us from our study, if you would have us. Look you, I would lay any wager that the Danbys, at least, are hard at work, while we are speaking.

*Lucy.* Yes, to settle what fine tricks they can contrive to put upon us.—But pray, Frank, is it true that papa will let us pass the evening here? Our room above is so very small, we could not have found room to turn ourselves well round.

*Frank.* Could my papa refuse you any thing, when I concerned myself to ask it? Softly, little girl, do not discompose the papers—Let them lie.

*Lucy.* Keep that advice, Sir, to yourself: I meant to lay them smooth.

*Frank.* (*with an air of importance.*) No, no, you

you cannot miss; I am charged with that commission.

*Lucy.* Truly, my papa could not have given it to so orderly a gentleman; let me at least assist you then; and afterwards I will put the chairs in order. These great books I shall remove first.

*Frank.* Do not think of touching them! At most I can permit you only to take one by one, and pile them up upon my hand. *(She does so, till they reach his chin.)*

*Lucy.* There is enough.

*Frank* *(leaning backwards.)* One more only. So—I have now sufficient for one turn. *(He takes a step or two, when all the books fall down.)*

*Lucy, (bursting out a laughing.)* Ha, ha, ha, ha! there, there they go! Those handsome books that papa would never let us touch! I fancy he will be greatly pleased to see them all tumbled together thus!

*Frank.* I had lost the center of Gravity, as my tutor says; and you know, he is Gravity itself. *(He picks the books up, but they tumble down as fast as he gathers them.)* Deuce take it! They have been at Sadler's Wells, I think, and learned to tumble sure!

*Lucy.* You will never finish, if I do not assist you. So, d'ye see, I will spread my apron, and do you stopp down and pile them in it.

*Frank.*

*Frank.* That is well thought, indeed!  
(*Frank goes upon his knees, takes up the books, and places them in order in his sister's apron.*)

*Lucy.* Softly, brother, they will rub one against another! So; I have got them all, and now I will carry them into the closet.  
(*She goes out.*)

*Frank, (rising out of breath.)* Bless me! I should never do to live in the country where men go upon all-fours like monkies. (*He fans himself with his hat.*)

*Lucy, (re-entering.)* Could you see how neatly I have ranged them on the chimney, you would be charmed! So let me have the rest. (*Frank puts the other books and all the papers in his sister's lap, who says, when she receives them,*) Well, every body must acknowledge that girls are cleverer than boys.

*Frank.* O yes, and you particularly. Isabella is constantly employed in putting by your shreds and rags.

*Lucy.* And if your tutor had not constantly his eye upon you, you would never know where you should find your exercises and translations. (*She looks about her.*) But I fancy I have now got them all.

*Frank.* Yes, yes; there is nothing left; so get you gone. (*Lucy goes out.*)

*Frank, (putting back the chairs and tables in their places.)* There; so that is done, and we shall

shall now have elbow-room enough. I cannot help thinking what fine work we shall be sure to make. However, I am surprised that they are not come yet. For my part, I can say I hardly ever make any one wait for me when a visit is in the case.

*Lucy, (entering once again, and looking round about.)* Ay, very well: but, brother, you must hide this speaking trumpet. If your friends should happen to perceive it, they will be sure to stun us with their noise.

*Frank.* Stay, stay; I will put it up behind the door, as perhaps I shall want it. Let your little friends come now and din me with their chattering, as they used to do, and we shall see who will cry out loudest.

*Lucy.* Psha! we need but join together; we should very shortly get the upper hand of such a little thing as you.

*Frank.* O no; for if you ladies have your clappers so well hung, we gentlemen possess a fine clear manly voice, which every one respects: as thus—You hear me?

*Lucy, (shrugging up her shoulders.)* Yes; and have so much respect, as you say, for you, that I will take myself away. Farewel. I will run and join my friends.

*Frank.* And bid the servant send me up my visitors when they arrive.

*Lucy.* Yes, yes. *(She withdraws.)*



*Frank, (taking up the speaking trumpet.)*  
Here is what has often brought me from the furthest corner of the garden, much against my inclination; and, I think, I hear it still.—So ho! there! Frank! Frank!—My young friends live only at the corner of the street. Let me see if I can hurry them. *(He puts the trumpet to his mouth, throws up the window, and cries out,)*

Girls and boys come out to play,  
The moon doth shine as bright as day;  
Come with a whoop, and come with a call,  
Come with good-will or not at all.  
*(He leaves the window, and draws near the door.)* Well, is not this surprising! It is like Harlequin's enchanted horn. I think I hear them talking to each other on the stairs. *(He listens.)* Yes, yes! I protest the two Danby's *(He puts the trumpet by.)* Suppose I were to jump on the table, and receive them sitting on my throne? *(He runs to fetch a stool that he may put it on the table; and prepares to take a spring, but the arrival of the two Danby's prevents him.)*

## SCENE II.

*Frank, Elder Danby, Younger Danby.*

*Frank.* Could not you have staid a little at the door till I was mounted on my throne, that I might give you audience, as they say, in all my glory?

*Elder Danby.* Good, indeed! you have no occasion to look exactly like a king. And active as you are, the throne might possibly cause your majesty a tumble.

*Frank.* Why, to say the truth, I have read of many tumbles of that nature in my ancient history.

*Elder Danby.* And in some sort, such an accident has happened to my brother, though he is no great prince. He fell down stairs last week, and hurt his nose considerably.

*Younger Danby, (stuttering.)* Yes, indeed! It pains me sti-ill a little, and that ma-a-after Roberts is a very nau-<sup>au</sup>-augh-ty boy.

*Frank.* Does he design to come to-night?

*Elder Danby.* I hope not: if we had expected him here, we should not have stirred out.

*Younger Danby.* He o-o-only thinks of mis-mischief.

*Frank.* What has he done then?

*Elder Danby.* We were both going out last Saturday. I stopped to get a handkerchief: my brother went down stairs alone, and, as it happened, Roberts hearing some one, came out sily, jumped at once upon my brother, who was frightened, lost his footing, and rolled down the stairs from top to bottom.

*Frank.* Poor Danby! I am sorry for you.

Roberts looks for all the world as if he loved such mischief. We shall have his company this evening for the first time in our lives; his father begged papa to let him come and see us.

*Elder Danby.* I am sorry for it; for we do not speak to one another.

*Frank.* My papa supposed you all good friends, because you lodge together, and considered that you would have the greater pleasure if he came.

*Elder Danby.* The greater pleasure! We should like to have him ten miles off. Since he has been our neighbour, we are continually uneasy. He has frequently amused himself with breaking windows, and then tried to lay the blame on us.

*Frank.* Does no one complain about him to his father?

*Elder Danby.* Oh! I do not know what to make of him, he is such an odd sort of a man! He scolds a little, pays the damage, and that is all.

*Frank.* If I were your papa, I would quit my lodgings, and live somewhere else.

*Elder Danby.* Yes, so he means to do, and therefore yesterday gave warning; and now we are forbidden all manner of connection with this Roberts, he is so wicked! Would you think it, very few go by the house, without

out being apprehensive that he will put some trick upon them. Sometimes he diverts himself by squirting puddle water at them, or else pelting them with rotten apples. Nay, he will sometimes fasten rabbits tails or bits of rags behind their backs, at which the people, when they see it, all burst out a laughing. Then too he has what he calls his *caxen fishery*.

*Frank.* Caxen fishery !

*Elder Danby.* Yes : he will take the people's wigs off, as they pass him, with a hook, as you would carp. When any poor man stops before his window to converse with an acquaintance, Roberts immediately goes up to the balcony, with a string suspended from a fishing-rod, and at the end of it a hook, with which he jerks the poor man's wig off. Then he runs and ties it to a dog that he has before provided for the purpose, after which he drives the creature out into the street, and off he sets that instant, so that the poor perriwig has frequently been dragged for twenty minutes through the mud, before its owner can lay hold of it again.

*Frank.* But this is more than mere amusement !

*Elder Danby.* And yet this is nothing to the stories that I could tell you. Why, he lames or bruises all the dogs and cats that  
come

come within his reach. Nor is it long ago, when one of his relations broke a leg, by slipping down upon the stairs where Roberts had been scattering peas on purpose. Ay, it is so; or else our name is not Danby. And for the servants, I am sure, his father would not get one to attend him, if he did not pay extraordinary wages.

*Frank.* Shall I tell you now? I long to see him. I like boys a little merry.

*Elder Danby.* Nothing is more natural: but Roberts's mirth is not like other children's. You, I know, love laughing in your heart; but would not, for the world, hurt any one; whereas this wicked fellow laughs at bumps and bruises.

*Frank.* Oh, that does not fright me in the least. I shall be much more pleased in paying him as he deserves.

*Elder Danby.* If he should come, my brother will not offend you by withdrawing? He would do him some fresh mischief.

*Younger Danby.* Ye-ye-yes, I will go.

*Frank.* No, no: we are old friends; and positively no new comer shall divide us. I will take care and manage him, I warrant you.—But do not I hear a noise upon the stairs?—It is Roberts.—No, I see my sister and her company.

SCENE



## SCENE III.

*Frank, Elder Danby, Younger Danby, Lucy, Isabella, Dorinda, Alice, Laura.*

*Lucy.* Your humble servant, my good friends! but why not seated, brother? You might easily have got the gentlemen a chair a-piece, since they have been with you. Sure there has been time enough.

*Frank.* As if we did not know that it is usual to stand up when we receive ladies.

*Lucy.* I am charmed to find you know your duty; but where is master Roberts? (*to the Danbys.*) I did suppose that you would have brought him with you.

*Elder Danby.* It is a long time now, thank Heaven, since we have been separated from him.

*Dorinda.* Is he then unluckier than Lucy's brother?

*Laura, (archly.)* Certainly he would be unlucky then, indeed!

*Alice.* Lucy's brother! He is a very lamb to Roberts. We have known him for a long time. Have we not, dear sister?

*Laura.* We have, and he has played me many a trick.

*Alice.* He was very intimate with Anthony, my brother; but he is rid of him entirely now: why, he is the saddest fellow in the world!

*Lucy,*

*Lucy.* Oh, as for that, my brother is even with him there.

*Dorinda.* But to do mischief merely for the pleasure of it---there is the villainy!

*Lucy.* No, no, my brother is better than that comes to.

*Frank, (with an air of irony.)* Do you really think so? I am obliged to you!

*Dorinda.* Well, well, my dear Lucy, we will be under your protection, you are the biggest of us; and besides, at present you are mistress of the house, and may command him.

*Lucy.* Do not you be afraid. I will keep him perfectly in bounds.

*Frank.* Yes, yes, Lucy: you shall take care of the ladies, and for you, (*to the Danbys*) I will take you under my protection.

*Elder Danby.* Oh! he will hardly think of playing tricks with me. He knows me, I assure you. I only fear for my brother.

*Younger Danby.* He makes ga-ga-me of me! yes, al-al-ways!

*Laura.* That is his way; he always attacks the least. He would never vex my sister,---none but me.

*Lucy.* I can believe you: such as he are always cowards. I compare him to a puppy following close upon a cat as long as she keeps running: but if once the cat turns round,

round, and shews her whiskers, then the puppy scampers for it.

*Frank.* Well then, sister, you shall be the cat.

*Laura.* And let him see your whiskers.

*Lucy.* But methinks it would not be amiss if we sat down. Though we expect this Mr. Mischief-maker, we have no need, I fancy, to remain standing up till he chuses to appear.

*Frank.* Hush! here he is.

#### SCENE IV.

*Frank, Eder Danby, Young Danby, Lucy, Isabella, Dorinda, Alice, Laura, Roberts.*

*Roberts, (to Frank and his sister, making them a bow.)* Your servant. Your papa was pleased to let me wait upon you: so I am come to spend the evening with you.

*Lucy.* We are glad to see you, and shall have a deal of pleasure in your company, at least my brother.

*Isabella.* Yes, indeed; he wants for good example.

*Frank.* Do I? So your good example, you would have the gentleman uppose, is not sufficient.

*Lucy.* Well, a truce to compliments. As mistress of the house, it is necessary that I should

should let you know who is who. This tall young lady, in the first place, is Miss Dorinda Lambton.

*Roberts, (with a banter.)* I am charmed to hear it.

*Lucy.* And these are the Misses——

*Roberts.* O, I know them very well. This here is (*pointing to Alice*) my lady---what is her name? Pentweazle, that will take you off the company, as simple as she seems: and there is (*pointing to Laura, and limping round the room*) Miss Up-and-down, who broke her leg by running from the rod. This gentleman, (*Elder Danby*) observe him, he is a grave wise Grecian, who looks strait before him when he walks, as if he pitied us poor silly children. And this other good little friend of mine (*pointing to younger Danby, and letting fall his hat*) is Pe-pè-peter Grievous, whose dear mama forgot, poor creature! to untie his tongue when he was born. (*The children seem surprized, and stare at one another.*)

*Frank.* And who am I, sir, for methinks you seem quite clever at this sort of portrait painting?

*Roberts.* Oh, I am not sufficiently acquainted with you yet, to take your likeness: but I shall let you have it soon.

*Lucy.* For you, sir, I could draw you at a glance,

glance, and I must tell you, the similitude would not be very pleasing. I could never have supposed it possible that any well bred little gentleman, as I imagine you affect to be, should think of turning natural defects into a theme for banter. If my little friends were not sincerely such, they would have reason to reproach me for exposing them to your indecency. But they can see that I could not have expected half so much myself.

*Roberts.* Why, Frank, I protest your sister is mighty eloquent. You need not go to church on Sundays, having such a charming preacher in the house.

*Frank.* She has tolerable skill, when any one is to be told the truth; and therefore both my sister Isabella and I love her sincerely.

*Roberts.* Well, well, you see I have tolerable skill likewise in telling truth; and therefore no doubt you will love me, too, sincerely. (*He bows to Lucy.*) I ask your pardon, miss, for having taken the employment out of your hands, as you are yourself so clever at it.

*Lucy.* Your excuses and your bow are both an insult; but an insult such as I despise. Though, were they on the other hand sincere, they would hardly make atonement for so coarse an incivility. If I had not consid-



dered every word that you said as meant in joke, however gross I cannot but suppose it, I should know what suited me to do, and should have done it likewise. Let me therefore beg, sir, that you will indulge in no more freedoms of this nature, if you mean that we should remain together.

*Roberts, (somewhat embarrassed.)* Well, but I see, you do not understand a little harmless piece of banter. Let us be friends. *(He holds out his hand.)*

*Lucy, (giving her's.)* With all my heart, sir; but provided——

*Roberts, (turning his back suddenly upon Lucy, and addressing young Danby.)* You are an honest little fellow, too, and I will shake hands with you. *(He hesitates to give his hand, and therefore Roberts seizing on him, shakes his arm so roughly, that he falls a crying.)*

*Elder Danby.* Master Roberts!

*Frank, (laying hold of Roberts's arm.)* Pray, sir, let this child alone; or——

*Roberts.* Well----or what?----my little Jack-a-dandy.

*Frank, (boldly.)* I am little, I acknowledge, but yet strong enough; and so you will find me, when my friends require to be defended.

*Roberts.* Say you so? in that case I should like to be one of them. But beforehand, if you please, we will have a brush, just to see  
how

how you will be able to defend them.—  
(*Roberts on a sudden tries to fling him down;  
but Frank stands his ground, and Roberts  
falls. The company rush in to part them.*)

Frank. But one moment, if you please,  
young ladies. I will not do him any harm.  
Well, Mr. Roberts, pray how do you find  
yourself? I fancy, I am your master.

Roberts, (*struggling.*) Take your knee off,  
---or you will stifle me.

Frank. No, no; you must not think of  
getting up, unless you first ask pardon.

Roberts, (*furiously.*) Pardon!

Frank. Yes, sir, and of all the company,  
as you have certainly offended all the com-  
pany.

Roberts. Well, well; I do ask pardon.

Frank. If you should insult us again, be  
assured, we will send you down into the cel-  
lar till to-morrow morning, which will sure-  
ly cool your courage. That is much better  
than to hurt you. We do not think you  
worth the trouble.---Rise. (*He gets from off  
him, and when both are up, continues,*) You  
have no right to be offended; for remember,  
it was yourself began the contest. (*Roberts  
seems ashamed.*)

Dorinda, (*aside to Isabella.*) I could never  
have supposed your brother half so valiant!

Isabella. Oh! a lion is hardly bolder; and  
yet,

yet, Dorinda, he never quarrels. He is, in short, although I say it, the best tempered little fellow in the world. (*To the company.*) But what are we doing? We ought to think of some amusement for the evening.

*Frank.* Certainly we ought, or why are we all come together? Well, what play shall we chuse? Something funny? What say you, Danby?

*Elder Danby.* We will let the ladies chuse. (*Roberts makes mouths at Frank and Danby: the rest pretend as if they did not see him.*)

*Lucy.* There, Frank, there is a lesson for you: we may chuse. Well then, suppose we play at questions and commands? or possibly you would like a game at cards much better?

*Laura.* I should rather play at something with the least Danby: if you have a picture-book, we will turn it over: shall we?

*Younger Danby.* O-o-o-oh, yes, yes.

*Lucy.* With all my heart, sweet dears! I will carry you up stairs. You will neither want for pictures nor playthings there.

(*Laura and the younger Danby take hold of one another by the hand, and jump for joy.*)

*Lucy, (to the ladies.)* My friends, will you go with me for amusement into my apartment? I have a charming bonnet that you will like to see.

*All*

*All (together.)* Yes, yes, yes; let us go.

*Elder Danby.* Will you accept my hand as far as your apartment, Miss Lucy?

*Lucy.* Rather let Miss Dorinda or Alice have it, if they please.

*(The elder Danby presents his hand to Alice, who happens to stand next him.)*

*Roberts.* What then, do you mean to leave me by myself here?

*Frank.* No, sir; these young ladies will excuse me, so I shall stay; but I am obliged to leave you for a moment.

*Roberts.* Are you? but I will follow you. I do not like to be left alone by night, and in a house where I am a stranger.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*Frank, Roberts.*

*Roberts.* The truth is, I was apprehensive lest you might think of playing me some trick; so I accompanied you. But now that we are returned, and all alone, we may devise some mirth between us.

*Frank.* Very willingly; I ask no better: so let us think a little.

*Roberts.* We must have some fun, I fancy, with the younger Danby.

*Frank.* If by fun you mean some trick to hurt him, I say no: I will not be in a joking humour; so pray leave him out if you are bent on mischief.

*Roberts.* They told me that you were always merry, and fond of something funny.

*Frank.* And so I am: but, notwithstanding, without hurt to any one. However, let me know what sort of fun you meant.

*Roberts.* Look you: here are two large needles. I will stick them both with the points upward in the bottom of two chairs, that common eyes shall not discern them. In the next place you shall offer two of these young ladies the two chairs, for very likely they would suspect that I meant them mischief of some sort or other, and they will naturally both sit down: but figure to yourself what strange grimaces they will both make! Ha! ha! ha! ha! It makes me die a laughing, when I barely think what faces we shall see them put on! Ay, ay, and your prudish sister, too, will find the matter quite diverting.

*Frank.* But suppose I were to treat you just in the same manner, would you like it?

*Roberts.* Oh! treat me! that is different; but those little idiots——

*Frank.* So you call them idiots, do you, since they are not mischievous?

*Roberts.*



*Roberts.* Well, you are mighty formal and precise. Then shall I mention something else?

*Frank.* Yes, do.

*Roberts.* Then I have some thread as strong as whipcord in my pocket. I will thread one of these great needles with a little of it; and as soon as they are all come down, one of us shall go up very politely towards them, make a deal of scraping, and wry faces, while the other, keeping still behind, shall sew their gowns together. They will all want to dance, as you may guess; so up we will come, and take them out.---Ha! ha! you know the rest; ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

*Frank.* Yes, to tear their gowns, and get them anger when their parents find it out:

*Roberts.* Why there is the fun.

*Frank.* What! have you no pleasure then in any thing but doing mischief?

*Roberts.* But it does not hurt me.

*Frank.* O ho! I understand: you think of no one but yourself, and all the world is nothing to you!

*Roberts.* Well; but we are come together to divert ourselves, and we must positively have some laughing. So suppose we frighten Laura and the least Danby?

*Frank.* But that is quite wrong. Supposing any one should frighten you?

*Roberts.*

*Roberts.* With all my heart, if any one is but able. I am afraid of nothing.

*Frank, (aside.)* Say you so?---That we shall see, perhaps.---(*Aloud to Roberts.*) Well, about this frightening?

*Roberts.* I have an ugly mask at home. I will run and fetch it. And do you, when I am gone, contrive to bring the little children down, and you shall see---I will not be absent half a minute.

*Frank, (aside.)* Good!---There shall be a better mask ready for you, though!---*To Roberts, calling him back.)* But Roberts! Roberts!

*Roberts.* What is the matter?

*Frank.* It will be better that we should come upon them where we are, if I can bring the others down; for when there are but two or three in this part of the house, there sometimes comes a spirit; and in that case, we ourselves should be but badly off.

*Roberts.* What is all this story of a spirit?

*Frank.* Nay, it is true. At first one hears a noise, and then a phantom with a lighted torch glides by, and then the room seems all on fire. (*He draws back, as if afraid.*) Oh! methinks I see it now.

*Roberts, (a little frightened.)* See what?---O dear!---And what can bring the phantom here?

*Frank.*

*Frank. (drawing Roberts towards a corner, and then whispering to him.)* The reason, as we are told, is this: There was a miser who lived here formerly, and he was robbed one night of all his money: in despair he cut his throat, and now from time to time his ghost goes up and down——

*Roberts, (in a tremble.)* O ho! I will stay no longer here, unless you get more company.

*Frank.* But recollect how brave you were just now.

*Roberts.* You must not fancy I am afraid: ---but---but---but---but---but I will go and fetch my mask.

*Frank.* Do, do; and I will prepare things here.---What pleasure we shall have!

*Roberts, (with a grin.)* Oh! enough to make one die with laughing!

*Frank.* They will be finely frightened!

*Roberts.* That they will! and therefore I will make haste. I am at home and back again--you shall see how soon! *(He goes out.)*

*Frank, (close.)* Ah! ah! you want to frighten others, and are not afraid yourself! Well, well, I have thought of something that will frighten you, or I am very much mistaken.

## SCENE II.

*Frank, Lucy, Isabella, Dorinda, Alice, Elder Danby.*

*Lucy.* We saw Master Roberts run across the street this moment---What is the matter? Have you had a quarrel?

*Frank.* On the contrary, he thinks me his best friend. I have seemed willing to go shares with him in a trick that he means to put upon the little ones above; but it is himself that he will trick, and never wish to come here a third time.

*Lucy.* Well, what is your project?

*Frank.* You shall know very soon. At present I have no time to lose, for every thing must be in readiness against his coming back: so, ladies, I request permission to be absent for about five minutes.

*Dorinda.* Yes, go, go: but do not stay longer. We are all impatient to be told what you design.

*Frank.* I shall consider it my duty to inform you when I have finished my preparations. So once more with your leave. I will come again in less, perhaps, than five minutes. *(He goes out.)*

*Lucy.* Ah! ah! ah!---Two pretty fellows together! We shall see what good comes out between them! They are well matched.

*Elder*

*Elder Danby.* Oh! for Heaven's sake, Miss Lucy, do not do such dishonour to my friend, your brother, as to name him and that wicked Roberts together.

*Alice.* You are in the right, Danby. One is nothing but politeness, and the other quite a savage.

*Isabella.* Savage as he is, however, I would lay a wager that Frank will be found his master.

*Dorinda.* What a piece of service Frank would do us, could he clear the house of such a fellow! We shall have no pleasure all the evening if he stays among us.

*Lucy.* I am afraid, however, Frank will proceed too far, and think himself permitted to do any thing against this Roberts.

*Elder Danby.* He can never do enough; and though his scheme should be a little hard on Roberts, there will be instruction in it: it is the greatest service that one can do him: and his father, I am persuaded, will be pleased with Frank, when he hears what pains he has taken to instruct his son. Alas! he would part with half his fortune to have Roberts like him.

*Alice.* So, Lucy, do not you go about to thwart your brother's good intentions.

*Lucy.* But, my dear Miss Alice, I am in a ticklish situation: I am now instead of my  
mama,



mama, and cannot possibly let any thing go forward that she would not approve.

*Alice.* Let him have his way. We will take the blame of what he does upon ourselves.

*Isabella.* Yes, let him sister. War, I say, war; war for ever with the wicked!

*Frank, (returning joyfully.)* I have settled every thing, and Roberts may appear whenever he thinks proper. We will receive him.

*Lucy.* But, I hope, you will tell me——

*Dorinda.* Yes, we will be in the plot too: and more than that, assist you if we can.

*Frank.* No, ladies, that is not necessary. There is a little violence, I must acknowledge, in my plot, and therefore I will not make you parties. I have been settling every thing with Ralph in the stable. He conceives my meaning clearly, and will second it with great dexterity.

*Lucy.* But still, you do not acquaint me——

*Frank.* This is all of the contrivance that you need know. We will go to Blind-man's Buff, that Roberts may suspect no harm on his return. I will let myself be caught, and he or she that blinds me must take care that I may have an opportunity of seeing through the handkerchief, and fixing upon Roberts. After he is blinded, you shall steal into the closet, take away the lights, and leave us both together. When I want your aid, I will call you.

*Frank.* It is master Roberts; but he was not in the play. You must begin again.

*Roberts.* Undoubtedly, Frank is right.

*Dorinda.* Well, be it so; but if I catch you again, it shall be all fair. Remember, I have warned you.

*Roberts.* O yes, yes. (*He takes Frank aside, and lets him see a little of the mask.*) What think you of it?

*Frank, (feigning to be frightened.)* O how frightful! I should certainly be terrified at seeing it myself. Well, hide it carefully: we will play a little, and then slip away.

*Roberts, (whispering Frank.)* Yes, yes, we will: but I must, first of all, do something to teize the ladies.

*Frank, (whispering Roberts.)* I will go up to Dorinda, and turn her round: if she should catch me, she will suppose it to be you, and must set out again.

*Roberts, (whispering Frank.)* Good! good! I will have a little fun with her too.

*Alice.* Well; when will you have told each other all your secrets? Two fine gentlemen! why, do not you see, the game stands still?

*Roberts.* You need not stay for us; we are ready.

*Frank, (keeping near Miss Dorinda, as if he wished to pull her by the gown, and seeing Roberts go to fetch a chair,)—(Aside.)* Now, Miss Dorinda, I will put myself into your way.

(*Roberts brings a chair, and puts it so that Dorinda may tumble over it; but Frank takes it away, and puts himself instead, upon his hands and feet, with so much noise, that Dorinda may hear him. As she slides*

along her feet, as if at hazard, she encounters Frank, sprints and seizes him.)

Dorinda, (after having felt about his cape and wrists, and seeming doubtful) It is Master Frank.

Frank, (in appearance disconcerted.) Yes, indeed; I am taken. What ill luck! so soon?

Dorinda, (pulling off the bandage.) O, ho! you wanted to throw me down! I thought nobody but master Roberts played such tricks; but it shall not be long before I take revenge. (She covers Frank's eyes, so that he can see a little, leads him towards the middle of the room, and, as is the custom of the game, asks him,) How many horses in your father's stable?

Frank. Three; black, white, and grey.

Dorinda. Turn about three times, and catch whom you may. (Frank gropes about, and lets himself be jostled as they please. Dorinda particularly plagues him; he pretends to follow her, but all at once turns round, and falls on Roberts.)

Frank. Ah! ha! I have caught you! have I? It is a boy. It is Roberts! (pulling off the bandkerchief.) Yes, yes; I am not mistaken.

Roberts, (whispers Frank.) Why lay hold on me?

Frank, (whispers Roberts.) Do not mind it. You shall catch Danby. I will push him towards you.

Roberts, (to Frank.) Do, and you shall see how I will make him squeak: I will pinch him till the very blood comes. (Frank covers Roberts's eyes, and nods to the company as he had settled it. Elder Danby and the little ladies take away the lights, and all together run into an adjoining closet quietly.)

Elder Danby, (as he steps into the closet.) Well: have you finished? Oh make haste. You take a

deal of time. What mischief are you whispering to each other? (*Here the groom presents himself at the door, with a lighted torch in one hand, and a stick beneath it in the other, with a large full-bottomed wig upon it. He is covered over with Mr. Jephson's gown, trailing on the ground behind him. Frank beckons him to keep back, while he is blinding Roberts.*)

Frank, (*putting Roberts in the middle of the room.*) How many horses in your father's stable?

Roberts. Three; black, white and grey.

Frank. Turn about—(*pretending to be angry with the others.*) Be quiet pray, young ladies, and not quit your places till the game is begun.—Turn about three times, and catch whom you may.—(*While Roberts turns about, Frank runs for the speaking trumpet, bids the groom untie a chain that he has about his waist, which falling makes a hideous noise, and then he cries out lustily himself,*) The ghost! the ghost! Run, Roberts, for your life. (*He claps the door so violently, hides himself behind the Groom, and speaking through the trumpet, says,*) It is you then that come to steal my treasure?

Roberts, (*trembling with fear, and not daring to pull off the bandage.*) Fire! fire! Danby! Where are you, Frank! Murder! murder! Dorinda!

Frank, (*speaking through the trumpet.*) I have scared them all away. Pull off your bandage, and look at me. (*Roberts, without pulling off the bandage, puts his hands up to his face, retiring from the ghost.*)

Frank. Pull it off, I say—(*Roberts pulls the bandage down about his neck, but dare not lift his eyes up, and at last, when he observes the ghost, he screams out, and has not power to move.*)

Frank. I know you well, your name is Roberts. (*Roberts hearing this, runs up and down to get*



*away, but finding the door shut, falls down upon his knees, holds out his hands, and turns away his head.)*

*Frank.* What you think to escape me, do you?

*Roberts, (after several efforts.)* I have done nothing to you. You were never robbed by me.

*Frank.* Never robbed by you? You are capable of any villainy! Who squirts at people in the street? Who fastens rabbits' tails behind their backs? Who fishes for their wigs? Who lames poor dogs and cats? Who sticks up pins in chairs to prick his friends when they sit down! And who has in his pocket even now, a mask to frighten two poor little children?

*Roberts.* I have done all this! indeed, I own it! but for heaven's sake pardon me, and I will not do so any more.

*Frank.* Who will answer for you?

*Roberts.* Those that you have frightened away, if you will but call them.

*Frank.* Do you promise me yourself?

*Roberts.* Yes, yes; upon my honour,

*Frank.* Well then, I take pity on you; but remember, had it been my pleasure, I might easily fly away with you through the window. *(Here the phantom makes his torch glare like lightning, and then goes out. Roberts, almost swooning with terror, falls on his face.)*

#### SCENE the Last.

*Roberts, Frank, the Groom, Mr. Jephson.*

*Mr. Jephson, (entering with a candle in his hand.)*  
What is all this disturbance?

*Roberts, (without looking up.)* It is not I that make it. Pray, pray, do not come near me!

*Mr. Jephson, (perceiving Roberts on the ground.)*  
Who can this be on the ground?



*Roberts.* You know me well enough, and have already taken pity on me.

*Mr. Jephson.* I already taken pity on you!

*Roberts.* It was not I that robbed you.

*Mr. Jephson.* Robbed me! what does all this mean? do not I know you, master Roberts?—

*Roberts.* Yes, yes; that is my name, good ghost: so pray do not hurt me.

*Mr. Jephson.* I am astonished! why in such a posture? (*He puts down the light, and lifts him up.*)

*Roberts.* (*Struggling first of all, but knowing Mr. Jephson afterwards.*) Mr. Jephson, is it you? (*his features brighten*) He is gone then! is he? (*he looks round about him, sees the ghost, and turns away again.*) There, there he stands!—the phantom!—don't you see him? (*Frank brings the children from the closet. Laura and younger Danby are frightened at the groom's appearance, but the rest burst out a laughing.*)

*Mr. Jephson.* Well! what signifies all this?

*Frank.* (*coming forward.*) Let me explain the whole, papa. This phantom is your groom; and we have put on him your wig and gown.

*Groom.* (*dropping his disguise.*) Yes, sir, it is I.

*Mr. Jeph.* An odd sort of sport this, Frank!

*Frank.* True, but ask the company if master Roberts has not well deserved to be thus frightened. He designed to frighten Laura and Danby: I only wished to hinder him. Let him but shew the frightful mask that he has about him.

*Mr. Jephson.* (*to Roberts.*) Is this true?

*Roberts.* (*giving him the mask.*) I cannot deny it: here it is, sir.

*Mr. Jephson.* You have met with nothing, then, but what you deserve.

*Dorinda.* We persuaded Miss Lucy to permit her brother to make use of this device to punish Roberts.

*Alice.* If you knew besides, sir, all the other tricks that he meant to play us—

*Mr. Jephson.* What, sir, is this the sample that you give us of your behaviour, the first time you set foot within my doors? You have been disrespectful to me in the person of my children, who were pleased with the expectation of having you as their guest. You have been disrespectful to these ladies, whom I need not say you should have honoured and regarded. So be gone! Your father, when he comes to know that you have been turned out of doors, will see how necessary it is to correct the vices of your heart. I will not permit your detestable example to corrupt my children. Go, and never let me see you here again! (*Roberts is confounded, and withdraws.*) And you, my friends, although the circumstances of the case may very possibly excuse what you have done, yet never, for the time to come, indulge yourselves in such sport. The fears which have power to affect children at a tender age, may possibly be followed by the worst consequences during their whole life. Avenge yourselves upon the wicked only by behaving better; and remember, after the example which master Roberts has afforded you, that by intending harm to others, you will ofteneft bring it down upon yourselves.



THE END.

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